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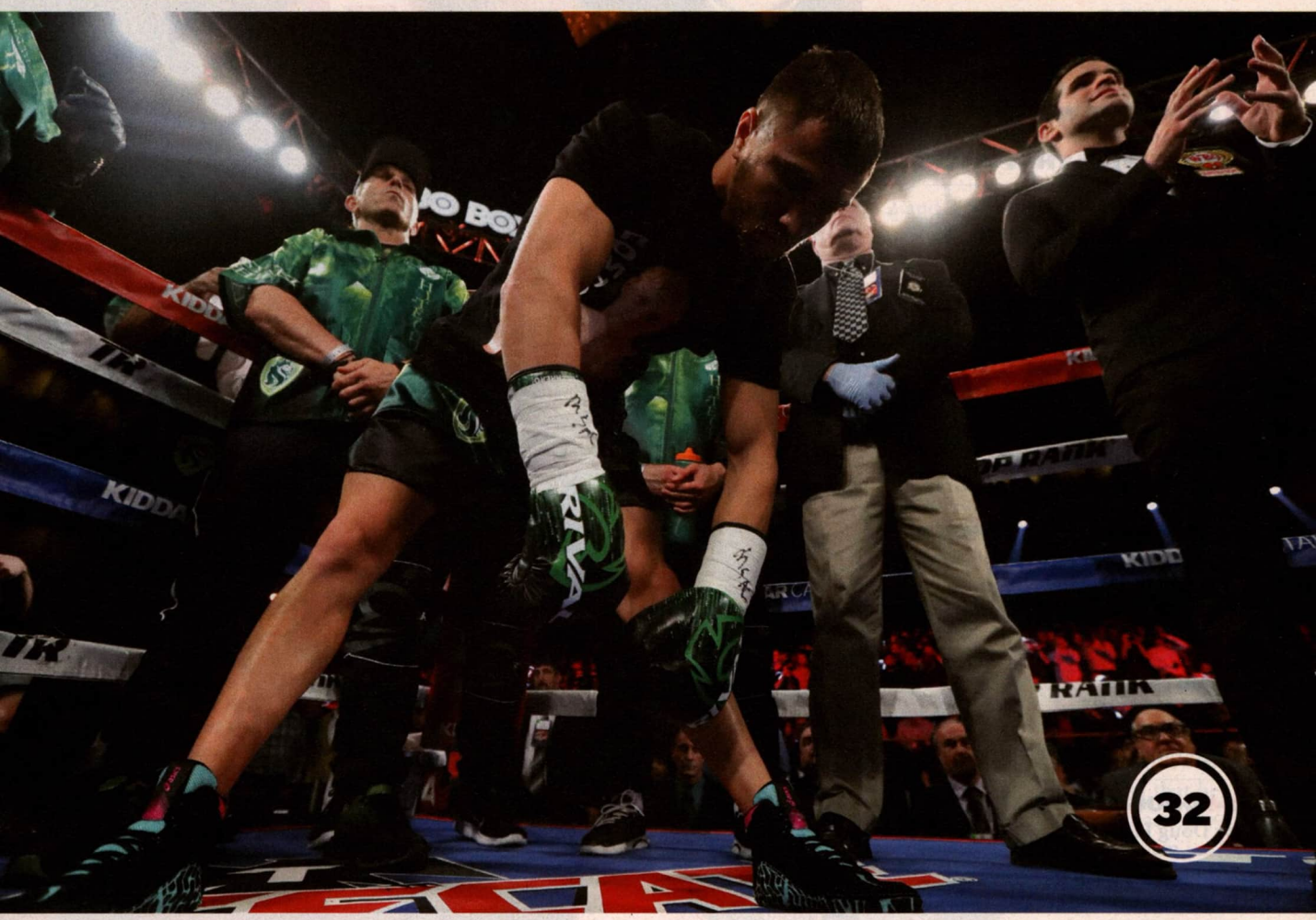

Vasyl Lomachenko's skills might be unrivaled in boxing today.

MIKEY WILLIAMS

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★★★

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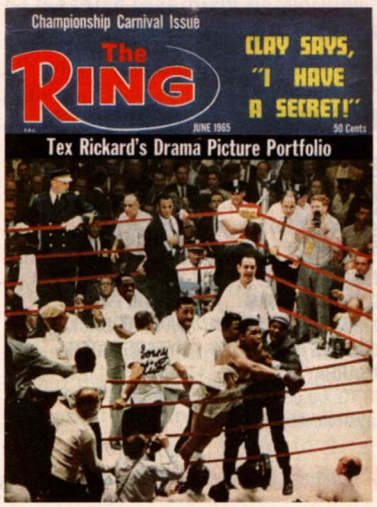

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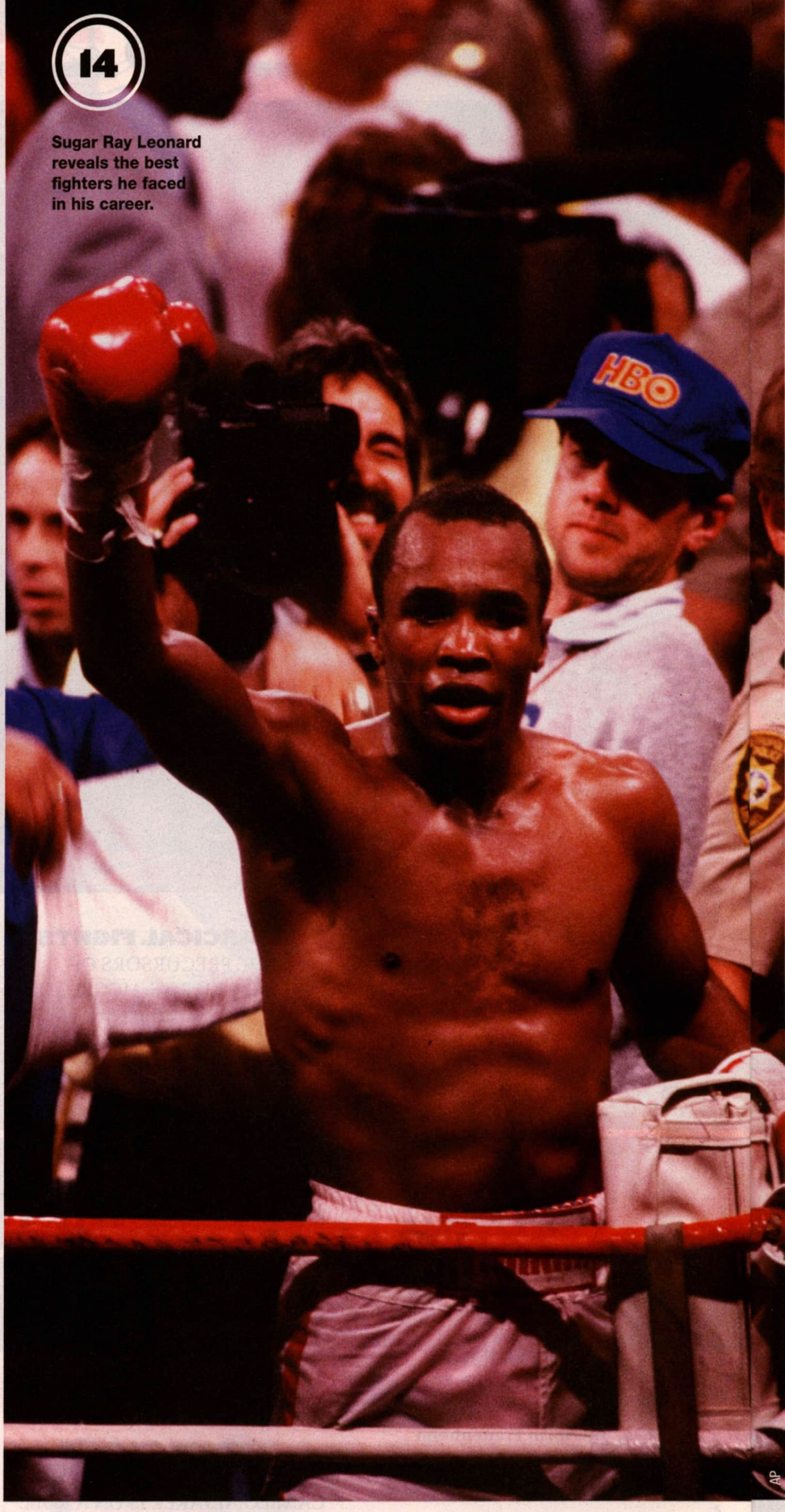

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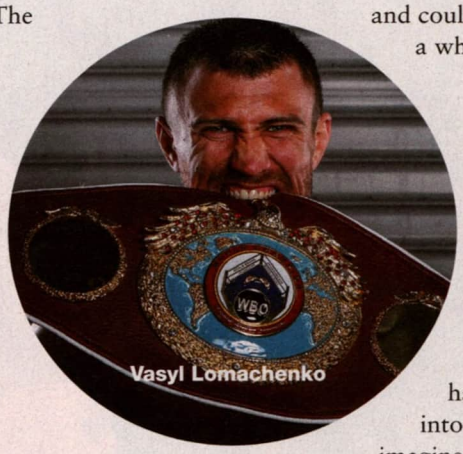
ENJOY HIM WHILE YOU CAN

There are many good boxers in the world. There are a handful of excellent ones. And there are still fewer great ones. Vasyl Lomachenko is looking more and more as if he'll end up in that last group.

THE RING explores exactly why that is the case in our cover story (see Page 32). Suffice to say here that Lomachenko is making a strong impression early in his pro career.

Lomachenko reminds me of a prime Floyd Mayweather Jr. in one sense: The Ukrainian has a refined ability to hit and not be hit, to control the ring and to ultimately make even good opponents look foolish. Mayweather did too.


Vasyl Lomachenko

The difference between them is that Lomachenko is more entertaining than his predecessor.

Mayweather was content simply to win fights, particularly in the last decade of his career. Not Lomachenko, whose desire and ability to hurt you is chilling. He isn't a huge puncher but he destroys you over time with an accumulation of punches, which ultimately leave his overmatched foes confused, battered and beaten.

Nicholas Walters and Jason Sosa, his most recent opponents, will tell you all about that. They had no clue how to cope with this fighting wizard, which left even the most seasoned observers in awe of Lomachenko.

That can't be said of about many other fighters. I believe that in the next two or three years the Nos. 1, 2 and 3 fighters pound-for-pound probably will be Lomachenko, Terence Crawford and Mikey Garcia – in whatever order you choose – with a few wildcards giving chase.

I think Crawford might be as talented as Lomachenko even though my gut tells me otherwise. I think Garcia is more fun to watch because of his combination of ability and crushing power, which endears him to fans. But my guess now is that Lomachenko will end up No. 1 and could remain there for a while.

Time will tell. Lomachenko is close enough in weight to Crawford and Garcia that he could actually meet them in the ring for matchups that would send hardcore fans into a tizzy. Can you imagine? And, obviously, he'll have other significant tests before he's finished.

If he passes them – and, again, I think he will – he could evolve into the best fighter in the post-Mayweather era.

One thing that might be working against Lomachenko is his age; he's 29, which is ancient for a boxer with only nine professional fights.

That's one reason the two-time Olympic champion, who had almost 400 amateur fights, has wasted no time easing his way into the paid ranks. He has chosen to face the best opposition from the beginning, which has contributed to the fascination that surrounds him.

That means the most compelling portion of his career is approaching rapidly. Don't blink. It very likely will be something to behold. RING

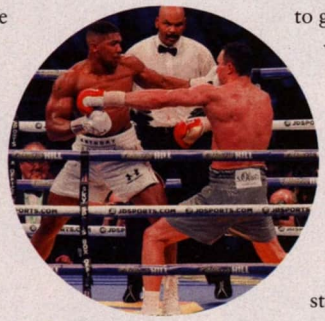
OPENING SHOT

Wladimir Klitschko (left) couldn't avoid Anthony Joshua's biggest punches in the end.

AP

JOSHUA VS. KLITSCHKO
GRATEFUL

I am a 30-year-old, almost-lifelong boxing fan who is, for the most part, more knowledgeable of past fights and fighters than I am of contemporary ones. Been trying to fix that. Your magazine and site help, of course. I'm grateful to have seen the Anthony Joshua-Wladimir Klitschko fight. Not to put too melodramatic a point on it, but it's the first time I'd ever really felt as if I was watching boxing history unfold. Y'know? It lived up to the classics on which I have gorged and spoiled myself. For what it's worth, my half-assed attempt at scoring the fight had Klitschko ahead on points going into the 11th. And while I'd have liked to have seen him win one for the old guys, I had no dog in this fight and look forward to AJ's future. People seem to worry boxing will die out or something, but it's probably one of the very few human inventions that'll last as long as we do; it just won't always be as damn-near-perfect as the April 29 fight.



Ben Farley
Oakham, Massachusetts

CONGRATULATIONS!

Wow! The Joshua vs. Klitschko bout would have to be one of the best heavyweight fights of the modern era. The matchup was intriguing from the moment it was announced, and on fight night neither fighter disappointed. I'm compelled to write as I want to congratulate both fighters on giving us boxing fans a fight to remember. It was refreshing to see the respect the fighters gave one another in the lead-up to the bout, reminding us it's not always necessary to talk trash to garner the interest of boxing fans. Well done to Joshua and Klitschko for the way you carried yourselves before, during and after the fight. You are assets and great role models for our grand sport.

Chris Foster
Nambeelup, Australia

BOTH VULNERABLE

Good fight. Joshua showed a lot of heart. Both guys were and are vulnerable. One thing is clear: Neither walks over Wilder. When he straightens out that right, it's a true one-hitter quitter. Wlad, showed a lot of character. Didn't think he had that kind of fight in him. When he was pushed, he pushed back – hard! I liked that. I just became a fan of his. Too bad he was too gassed to close the show. Joshua was DOA for nearly three rounds. Like Big George has said, power is one of the last things to go. All I can say in the end is it was a good fight.

Mike Howza
DeSoto, Texas

BAR RAISED

Joshua will have learned so much from this fight that will stand him in good stead for the future. And I finally changed my opinion about Klitschko: He is one of the greats. Heavyweight boxing is the winner as the bar has been raised to a new level by these fighters.

Ray Fox,
Keighley, England

★★★

THE GREATEST HEAVYWEIGHTS
INHERENT BIAS

While Muhammad Ali may have been the greatest heavyweight, as your heavyweight poll in the May 2017 issue finds, it is worth noting that such polls – whether of songs, movies, books, greatest presidents or boxers – invariably have a strong bias toward the more recent. Voters, whether members of the general population, experts, whatever, tend to register that which they have experienced in person or in the media far better than that from long ago. Many of the voters in your poll undoubtedly saw Ali fight, but very few saw Joe Louis and none saw Jack Johnson. If contemporaries of Louis and Johnson were alive today and voted in your poll, it is quite likely that one or the other – probably Louis – would have finished first in the poll.

Steven Goldberg
New York, New York

Editor's note: The editors of THE RING Magazine agree that contemporary fighters have an advantage in such polls for the reasons you stated. However, Louis was No. 2 and Johnson was No. 3. Not bad.

LEWIS AT NO. 11?

I just cannot understand how Lennox Lewis was rated only 11th in the RING heavyweight poll. Lennox had 18 world title fights and for 11 years was at or near the top of the heavyweight division. He defeated every opponent he met in the ring and, with arguably the exception of Muhammad Ali, fought and defeated more dangerous world-class punchers than any other heavyweight champion. When considering head-to-head abilities in the ring and career statistics, Lewis belongs in the Top 4 heavyweights of all time, along with Ali, Joe Louis and Larry Holmes. A soft, vague criterion such as societal importance should not be considered. Also, how can heavyweights be rated on a pound-for-pound basis? That is just plain daft. Along with Lewis, Wladimir and Vitali Klitschko were also given ridiculously low ratings (Nos. 16 and 17, respectively).

Gerard Mullarkey
London

Editor's note: The author of the article, Thomas Hauser, indicated that the participants in the poll could use their own definitions of "greatest." Also, if you don't consider the differences in weight from one era to another, then old-timers like Jack Dempsey and Rocky Marciano would never get the consideration they deserve.

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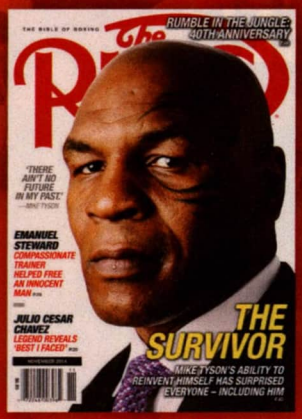

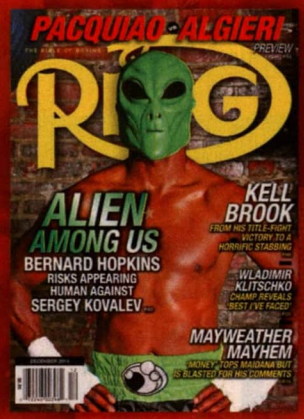

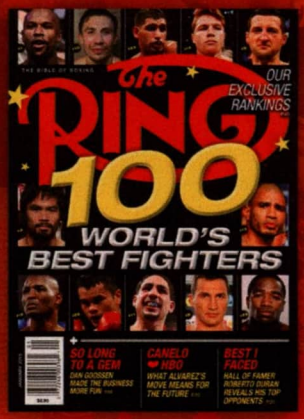

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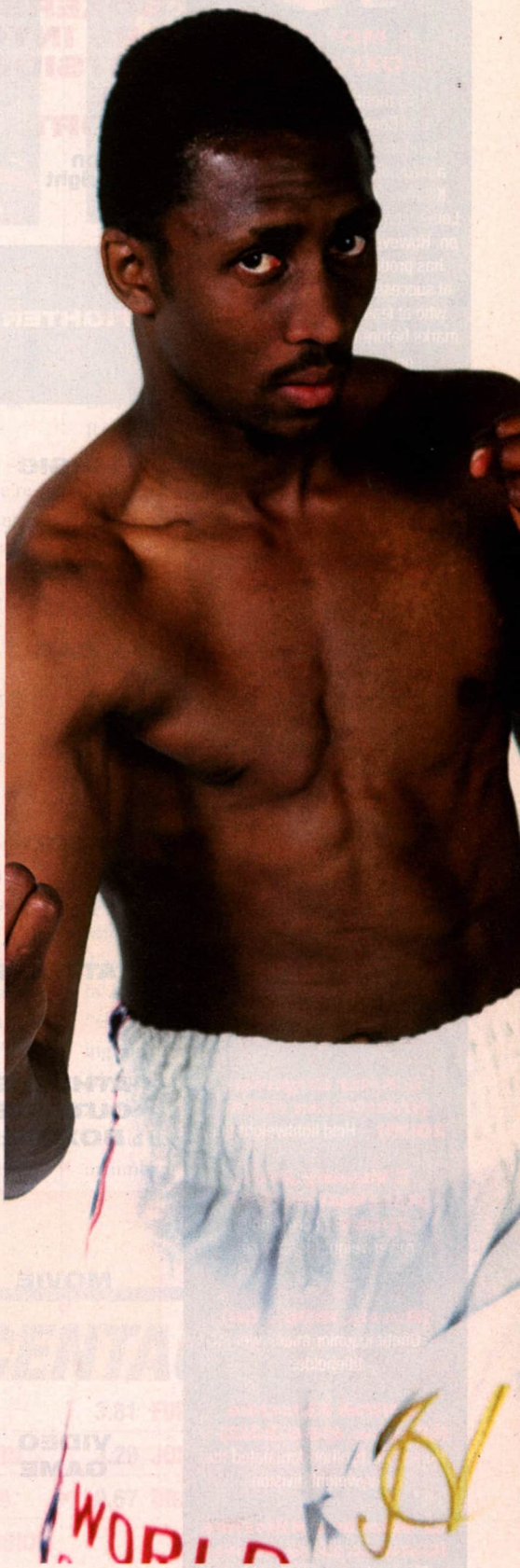
ADVANCED DEGREES

Degrees of separation between fighters of the past and their more contemporary counterparts. This month, regular contributor Gregg Morgan linked in only eight steps 5-foot-1½ Barbados Joe Walcott, the shortest welterweight titleholder ever, with one of the tallest, 6-foot-1 Thomas Hearns. Walcott last fought in 1911, Hearns in 2006. Here's a look:

JOE WALCOTT
fought
SAM LANGFORD,
who fought
BRAD SIMMONS,
who fought
HAM POUNDER,
who fought
ARCHIE MOORE,
who fought
MUHAMMAD ALI,
who fought
TREVOR BERBICK,
who fought
IRAN BARKLEY,
who fought
THOMAS HEARNS

Barbados Joe Walcott (left) and Thomas Hearns are the short and long of the welterweight division.



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A MONTHLY BOXING LIST

This month: Eastern Europe and Central Asia seem to be producing one excellent boxer after another these days. Sergey Kovalev, Gennady Golovkin, Vasyl Lomachenko … the list goes on and on. However, for decades the region has produced a smaller number of successful fighters. Here are 10 who at least began to make their marks before the turn of the century (in chronological order).

1. Matt Parlov (Croatia, 1975-80) – Among a deep pool of excellent 175-pounders.

2. Yuri Arbachakov (Russia, 1990-97) – Longtime flyweight stalwart.

3. Ahmed Kotiev (Russia, 1991-2000) – Welterweight titleholder in late '90s.

4. Dariusz Michalczewski (Poland, 1991-2005) – Longtime light heavyweight player.

5. Kostya Tszyu (Russia, 1992-2005) – Four-time 140-pound beltholder and Hall of Famer.

6. Artur Grigorian (Uzbekistan, 1994-2009) – Held lightweight title.

7. Vassiliy Jirov (Kazakhstan, 1997-2009) – Formidable cruiserweight for six years.

8. Roman Karmazin (Russia, 1996-2011) – Onetime junior middleweight titleholder.

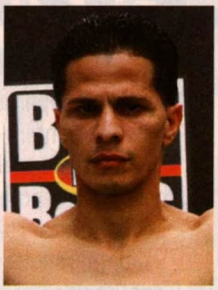
9. Vitali Klitschko (Ukraine, 1996-2012) – He and his brother dominated the heavyweight division.

10. Wladimir Klitschko (Ukraine, 1996-active) – The top heavyweight of his era.

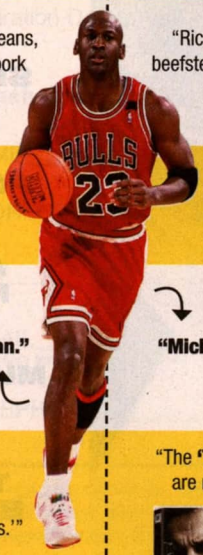
FIGHTERS' FAVORITES

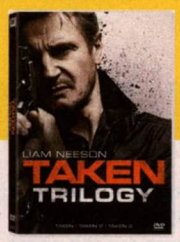
WHAT BOXERS ARE INTO OUTSIDE THE SPORT

— Anson Wainwright

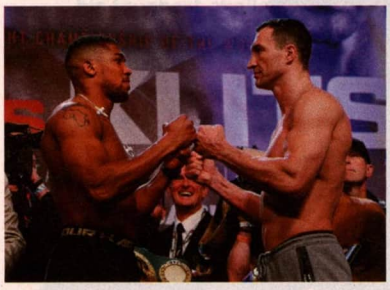


FIGHTER »	MCJOE ARROYO JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHT CONTENDER	MCWILLIAMS ARROYO (MCJOE'S TWIN BROTHER) FLYWEIGHT CONTENDER	BYRON ROJAS STRAWWEIGHT CONTENDER
MUSIC »	"All types of music, various artists. I don't have a favorite."	"Bachata – the group Aventura and singer **Romeo Santos**."	"I listen to a broad range of music, no particular favorite."
CAR »	"Currently driving a (Toyota) FJ Cruiser, but I love cars. I'm always switching cars. Different model cars are my biggest hobby."	"I drive a Toyota Yaris. My dream car is a 4-door **Cadillac Escalade**."	"Toyota Rav4 2.2."
FOOD »	"Rice and beans, beefsteak, pork chops and avocado."	"Rice and beans, beefsteak, fried sweet plantains and avocado."	"My favourite food, consistently, is a mix of **rice and beans**."
TATTOOS »	"No tattoos."	"No tattoos."	"None."
ATHLETE OUTSIDE BOXING »	**"Michael Jordan."**	**"Michael Jordan."**	"I'm a huge soccer fan and my favorite player is Lionel Messi."
MOVIE »	"'The Goonies.'"	"The **'Taken'** movies are my favorite."	"My favorite movie is 'Apocalypse.'"
VIDEO GAME »	**"Mario Kart."**	"I don't play video games."	"I don't really play them that much."



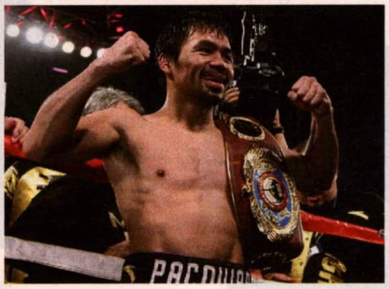


THE BEST AND WORST IN BOXING FROM THE PAST MONTH By Michael Rosenthal



GOOD

The **Anthony Joshua-Wladimir Klitschko** fight was far beyond good; it was the best heavyweight title fight in as many as 20 years, it made the division more relevant than it has been over the same period and it gave the sport the positive jolt that Floyd Mayweather Jr. vs. Manny Pacquiao failed to give it. For fans, Joshua-Klitschko was a reward for sticking with boxing through thick and thin (too often thin). We live for fights like this. For casual fans, it was a wake-up call to what the sport is capable of producing. If you weren't a fan before seeing that fight, there is at least a decent chance you are today. And, in this day and age, word spread very quickly about the drama that unfolded on April 29 at Wembley Stadium. In the U.S., Showtime broadcast the fight live in the afternoon while rival HBO broadcast the replay that evening. HBO did better ratings even though it wasn't live, suggesting that people nationwide who saw the Showtime telecast were saying, "You gotta see this." And they did. Everyone was winner – Joshua, Klitschko (who enhanced his reputation even though he lost), the fans, the sport. Quite a night.



BAD

Manny Pacquiao has earned an easy fight – Jeff Horn in July – after delivering one entertaining fight after another over the past 15-plus years. And we can't be certain that Horn will be a pushover given the Aussie's decent credentials and Pacquiao's age (38), although we're *almost* certain. The problem is that many fans surely are disappointed. They would like to see Pacquiao face real challenges while he remains a capable fighter. We were teased by a potential showdown with Amir Khan in the United Arab Emirates, an intriguing matchup, but that never materialized. Instead, we're left with a fight that seems to elicit the same reaction from everyone: "eh." That's not Manny Pacquiao. Pacman fights the best and generally delivers something worth watching, even in the late stages of his career. The glaring exception was his dud against Floyd Mayweather Jr. but, as we know, that was more about money than anything else. I hope that Horn surprises us and proves to be a worthy opponent for Pacquiao but I'll be stunned if that happens. When … er, if Pacquiao wins, I'll then hope that he decides to take a genuine risk. Terence Crawford? Mikey Garcia? Those are fights we can all get behind.

WORSE

Thomas Hauser wrote the latest of his occasional series on the New York State Athletic Commission in April. In the piece, which was posted on RingTV.com, he compared the NYSAC to the Keystone Cops of the silent film era. That's not good. The Cops were bumbling fools. Hauser's award-winning series has chronicled the hiring of unqualified and/or incompetent employees, disturbing decisions or inaction (some of which has endangered fighters) and poor performance in other areas. Some competent, diligent people work for the NYSAC but they seem to be the exception. Could it really be so difficult to put together a team of people in one of the nation's great states who can run the NYSAC efficiently? This isn't about just regulating a sport; it's also about the health and safety of its participants, as Magomed Abdusalamov's life-changing injuries in 2013 illustrate. As Hauser wrote, "sloppy procedures and practices ingrained in the NYSAC led to the Abdusalamov tragedy." New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo and his subordinates should be ashamed of themselves. It's incumbent upon them to get this right.

RING POLL

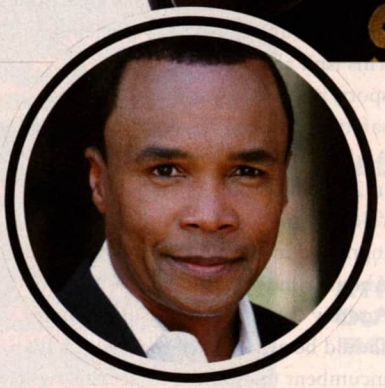
A MONTHLY POLL OF OUR RINGTV.COM READERS

Anthony Joshua's spectacular victory over Wladimir Klitschko led to talk of another obvious – and massive – heavyweight matchup. With that in mind, we asked: **What would be the result of a fight between Anthony Joshua and Tyson Fury?** Here is how you responded.

THE PERCENTAGES

64.00	JOSHUA BY KNOCKOUT
13.07	FURY BY CLOSE DECISION
9.56	FURY BY WIDE DECISION
5.60	JOSHUA BY CLOSE DECISION
3.81	FURY BY KNOCKOUT
3.29	JOSHUA BY WIDE DECISION
0.67	DRAW

NOTE: 1,339 READERS VOTED



SUGAR RAY LEONARD

36-3-1 (25 KOs)

Never judge a book by its cover.

The cover in this case might be "sugarcoated" with a dazzling smile, but the narrative is something else entirely. Sugar Ray Leonard spilled blood, sweat and tears, and displayed ruthless killer instinct in a career that saw him win Olympic gold in 1976, followed by 11 world titles, including four RING championships, in five weight divisions as a professional.

Leonard didn't look deranged like Roberto Duran. He didn't look indestructible like Marvelous Marvin Hagler. He didn't look physically terrifying like Thomas Hearns. But he beat them all. Sometimes finesse carried the day, but for the most part Leonard was required to produce soldier-like courage that belied his movie star exterior.

"Without those guys, there is no Sugar Ray Leonard," the 60-year-old Hall of Famer told THE RING. "It takes those kind of warriors, fighters, champions to bring out not just your best, but that inner you. To be great takes so much. There are moments when your eye is closed, you're cut, you're exhausted and there are still more rounds to go. That voice inside your head says, 'Let's do this now.'

Sugar Ray Leonard (left) says Thomas Hearns was his toughest challenge.

And you can't say, 'Let me get back to you.'"

Following the death of Leonard's idol, Muhammad Ali, last June, THE RING produced a Top 10 list of the greatest living fighters. Leonard topped it, beating out Duran for the No. 1 spot. That result speaks volumes about the era in which Leonard engaged. It's been 37 years since the Leonard-Duran trilogy began and both men remain at the pinnacle of modern boxing history.

"That's all very subjective and it depends on who you ask," said Leonard with modesty. "Put it this way: I know that the guys I beat were the crème de la crème. I feel proud. I'm sitting in my gym now and up on my wall there are photos in chronological order: from the Olympics to my fight with Hagler. I'm like, 'Man, that's pretty damn cool.'"

He is an individual who has constantly redefined himself, both inside and outside of the ring. He has had his demons, but the book that will chart the journey of Sugar Ray Leonard is almost certain to have a very happy ending. That is nothing less than he deserves.

BEST SKILLS

Thomas Hearns: At 147 pounds, Tommy was so quick and powerful. He was also a better boxer than he was given credit for, although he didn't always use [his skills] the way he should have. Tommy's punches were so effective and long that you had to get inside. You must get close enough. If you can't do that, you will not win.

BEST JAB

Hearns: How do you get around that thing? How do you contend with that weapon? I had to hurt him. First, he was chasing me down and then I was chasing him down. I became rejuvenated during that (first) fight and once I hurt a guy, it's over.

BEST DEFENSE

Floyd Mayweather Sr.: That defensive style rubbed off on his son, but the difference between Senior and Junior was that Junior could punch for his weight. Floyd Sr. had bad hands, brittle hands, and he couldn't punch. I need to mention Wilfred Benitez here too. He had great defense but I overcame it with my speed. I missed more than I landed but what I did land was effective.

BEST CHIN

Marcos Geraldo: He weighed in at 160 pounds (Leonard was 153). I would hit the guy with 20 [consecutive] shots, shots that would normally knock out a guy. All he would do was turn his chin and look right back at me. Geraldo also hurt me every time he hit me. I would guess – without medical experience – that he was the guy that started my partially detached retina. He would hit me and I saw three of him. (Trainer) Angelo (Dundee) had me fight a plethora of different fighters: boxers, punchers, slow guys, fast guys and big guys. The Geraldo fight was maybe a bit too extreme. (Laughs.)

BEST PUNCHER

Roberto Duran: In the first fight, he hurt me a number of times. There were body shots that, even though they didn't hurt me bad, I felt them. He hit me so hard that I was looking around to see who else was in the ring with us. Who else is in here except us and the referee? (Laughs.) Duran was methodical and he was constantly looking to break you down.

FASTEST HANDS

Hearns: Tommy could be sitting on his stool and hit you from the other corner. His punches were so long and fast. I remember that jab giving me so many problems [in the first fight] but, later on, I brought my own jab into play.

BEST FOOTWORK

Hearns: I don't remember anyone being superior to me with their feet, but Tommy used his feet in our first fight. His height and reach, plus his movement, gave me problems. I said to myself, "This son-of-a-bitch can box too."

SMARTEST

Duran: A smart man. He was elusive, he had good handspeed, he broke you down. His fights with Esteban De Jesus were prime examples of what he could do. I'd never been hit as hard up to that point. [Duran] threw punches in bunches and was a technician in the ring. It takes a real technician to win world titles from lightweight to middleweight.

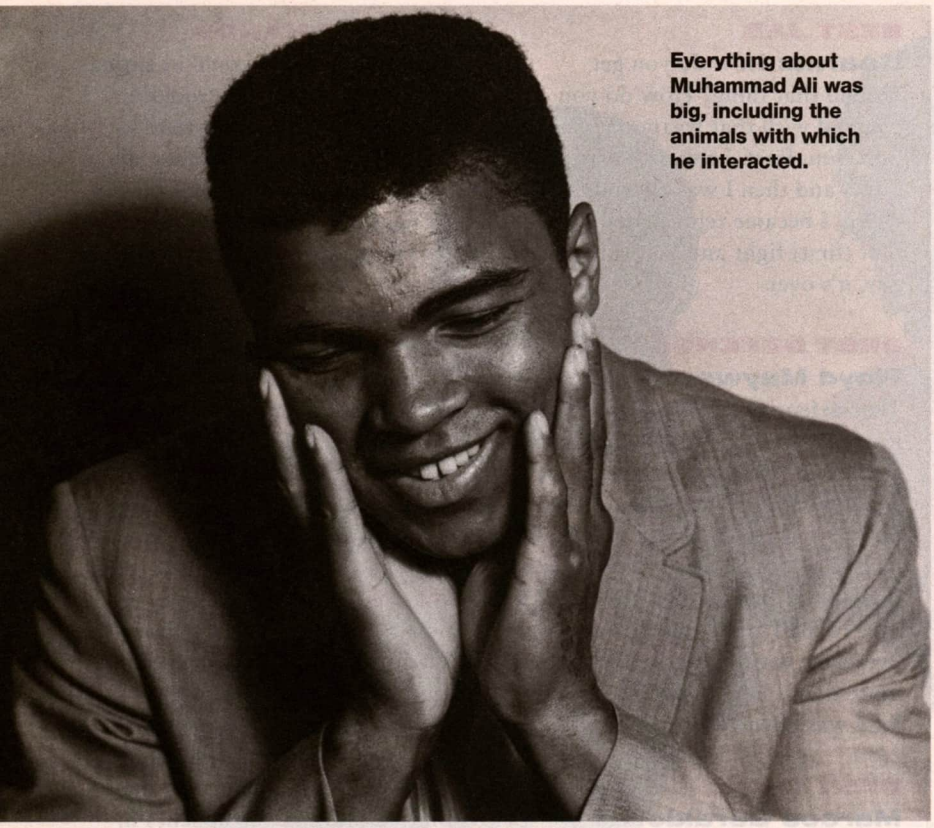
STRONGEST

Marvin Hagler: He was ambidextrous and could knock you out with either hand. It's just that in our fight he struggled to hit me flush. He hit me a couple of times where he rocked me, but it wasn't like Tommy and Hagler, which was a war. It wasn't like (Vito) Antuofermo and Hagler. I fought a very strategic fight.

BEST OVERALL

Hearns: It was Tommy. I don't think anything matches our first fight. My god, I can think about that fight and have nightmares. The ebb and flow, up and down; Tommy's winning, I'm winning. That went on until the very last punch.

Tom Gray is a U.K. Correspondent/ Editor for RingTV.com and a member of the RING Ratings panel. Follow him on Twitter: @Tom_ Gray_Boxing



Everything about Muhammad Ali was big, including the animals with which he interacted.

Muhammad Ali and the Elephant

FURTHER EVIDENCE THAT 'THE GREATEST' LIVED A HIGHLY UNUSUAL LIFE

What was it like to be Muhammad Ali?

For starters, this-couldn't-possibly-be-happening moments were common. Like the time Ali walked out of his home in Berrien Springs, Michigan, and found a real, live, enormous, honest-to-goodness elephant in the backyard.

That doesn't happen to most people. But it happened to Ali. Let me explain.

When I was researching and writing "Muhammad Ali: His Life and Times" almost 30 years ago, the Alis lived on an 88-acre farm in Berrien Springs. Half of their property was leased to a flower nursery. The other half, which the nursery operators maintained for the Alis, included a comfortable house and nicely kept grounds.

I traveled to Berrien Springs on numerous occasions while I was working on the book. One of these trips coincided with Bill Burke having some fun.

Burke was a longtime player in Los Angeles politics and, in the late 1980s and 1990s, president of the Los Angeles Marathon. He was also friends with Ali's closest friend, Howard Bingham.

Lonnie Ali was outside when the elephant arrived.

"I remember that a moving truck brought the elephant," Lonnie reminisced when we compared memories recently. "And I kept saying, I didn't order any furniture so why was a big moving truck coming through the gates."

Then an elephant emerged from the truck with its keeper. Lonnie went into the house and told Muhammad, "I think you better come outside."

Actually, the elephant wasn't Muhammad's to keep. After an hour, the keeper loaded it back onto the truck and off they went. Meanwhile, Ali was surprised that an elephant was in his backyard, although not as surprised as the average person might be. He asked if he could pat the elephant, and the keeper said yes. Then the keeper offered Ali the opportunity to climb on top of the elephant and go for a ride, but Muhammad declined. As did I.

It's also worth noting that, at dinner that night, Ali observed, "It's a good thing they didn't send a lion. It might have eaten the dog."

★★★

"Chuck" is the latest in a string of recent biopics about professional boxers. "Once upon a time," it begins, "I was the heavyweight champion of New Jersey. Hoboken had Sinatra. Bayonne had Chuck Wepner."

Liev Schreiber plays Wepner. That presents a challenge, since Wepner is a huge, hulking man and Schreiber lacks Wepner's physicality. Elizabeth Moss gives a virtuoso performance as Wepner's long-suffering first wife, Phyllis. Ron Perlman is suitably obnoxious as Wepner's manager, Al Braverman. Naomi Watts is enticing as the woman who becomes his second wife, Linda Wepner.

"Chuck" focuses on Wepner's 15th-round knockout loss to Muhammad Ali, the "Rocky" franchise that grew out of his inspirational effort that

night and the then-sordid underside of Wepner's character. Among other transgressions, the highlighted character flaws include profligate womanizing and a love affair with cocaine that led to a 26-month stint in prison for cocaine distribution. It's an unvarnished, warts-and-all portrait of Wepner.

"Raging Bull" set the standard to which all boxing biopics (and many other films) aspire. Years ago, Vikki LaMotta told me about sitting next to Jake at the premiere of "Raging Bull" in New York.

"When the movie ended," Vikki recounted, "the audience seemed stunned. Jake was sitting directly beside me. For a long time, he was silent."

"Jake, did you like it?" she asked.

"I don't know," he said finally. "I could see this movie 10 times and not know what to think. DeNiro is great. He's really me. But I see that man on screen. I know I've done all those things, and I don't like that person. He's a bad man, and I know it's me."

So how does the real-life Chuck Wepner feel about Liev Schreiber's portrayal of him in "Chuck?"

"I know it's not complimentary," Wepner acknowledged last month. "But it doesn't bother me. I wasn't always good. There were times when I was bad. It's who I was.

"This whole experience has been very gratifying for me," Wepner continued. "It's a major movie with two of the biggest stars in the world. It's a good movie, and I have a piece of it, so I'll make some money. And as far as me as a fighter, I know I wasn't great. I was a tough guy who could take a punch. That's what the movie shows me to be."

The fight scenes in "Chuck" are reasonably realistic, which is more than can be said of the fight scenes in many boxing movies today. At one point in the film, Linda says to Chuck, "There's more to you than meets the eye, Chuck Wepner. Not much. But enough."

The same can be said of this movie. It's an enjoyable ride.

★ ★ ★

How deeply ingrained is Don King in popular American culture? Recently, promoter Richard Schaefer recounted a moment that answers that question.

Years ago, Schaefer took his two sons to Party City to buy them costumes for Halloween. There were costumes of heroes like Superman and Batman, monsters like Frankenstein. And nestled among them, Don King.

"I don't know if Don was supposed to be a hero or a scary monster," Schaefer said. "But it brought a smile to my face. There was a Don King wig, an American flag and some plastic bling. My boys chose other costumes. And I bought a Don King costume for myself.

"When I put it on," Schaefer noted in closing, "am I a superhero or a super-villain? You can make an argument for both."

★ ★ ★

Michael Buffer readily acknowledges that a lot of people helped him get to where he is in boxing today. One of them was a man named Jody Berry.

Berry was born in Kentucky in 1936 and was a successful amateur boxer in the pre-Cassius Clay era. Then he embarked upon a career as a nightclub singer, the highlight of which was opening on occasion for Ella Fitzgerald.

Buffer met Berry after working a fight for Dan Goossen in the 1980s at the Reseda Country Club in California.

"We were in a cocktail lounge after the fights," Buffer recently said. "In those days, I'd say 'Let's get ready to rumble' and go right into '10 rounds of boxing,' or whatever came next, without a break. Jody was a showman. He knew timing. He said to me, 'Michael, after you say 'Let's get ready to rumble,' shut the F up.'"

"What do you mean?" Buffer asked.

"People want to react," Berry explained. "Give them time to voice their enthusiasm."

"So I tried it," Buffer said. "And you know the rest. It's interesting how you can be doing something that's working well, and then you get a little tip on how to make it better, and there it goes. Jody died of cancer about 10 years ago. I'll always be indebted to him."

★ ★ ★

And another King memory ...

Over the years, Roy Langbord has been involved in the acquisition of fights by multiple television networks and counseled a wide range of boxing luminaries. Recently, Langbord was reminiscing about a dinner he shared with Don King at Piero's Italian Cuisine in Las Vegas years ago.

"When I got to the restaurant," Roy recalled, "Don was sitting at a table with two women he'd just met. They gave every appearance of being hookers. One of them was in her late 30s or early 40s. The other was in her 20s. The older woman was acting as a sort of a pimp. She kept talking about the charms of the younger woman and saying things like, 'She can make you feel so good. The two of you could have so much fun together.'

"Don kept agreeing with what the older woman said," Langbord continued. "He seemed interested. It was an expensive dinner. Don paid the bill and tipped generously, as he always does."

And then?

"Don told his driver to take the women wherever they wanted to go and went back to his hotel alone. I asked why he'd spent so much time with them if he wasn't interested, and Don told me, 'Sometimes, I just like to watch a good hustler do their job.'" RING

Thomas Hauser can be reached by email at thauser@rcn.com. His most recent book – "A Hard World: An Inside Look at Another Year in Boxing" – was published by the University of Arkansas Press. In 2004, the Boxing Writers Association of America honored Hauser with the Nat Fleischer Award for career excellence in boxing journalism.

GO BACK TO SAME-DAY WEIGH-INS

BERNARD HOPKINS: 'GUYS SHOULD FIGHT IN THE WEIGHT CLASSES IN WHICH THEY BELONG'

This is one in a series of columns by future Hall of Famer Bernard Hopkins, who gives us his thoughts on various subjects important to every boxer and fan. This issue: a vote for same-day weigh-ins.

Boxing is a 24-hour-a-day, 365-days-a-year job and people forget that. It's why I lasted so long in the sport. Between fights, I was still training and watching what I ate. I maintained a comfortable weight. And when it was time to open training camp, I was able to devote my time to preparing a fight plan rather than having to worry about training to cut weight.

It's why I am very much in favor of same-day weigh-ins. I know same-day weigh-ins are a hot topic again since Danny Jacobs blew off his IBF mandatory weigh-in the day of his fight against Gennady Golovkin in their middleweight title fight in March. Was what Jacobs did right? No. Was it smart? Yes. Would I do it if I were a young professional today coming up? No.

There is a catch-22 with same-day weigh-ins. If a guy is not disciplined and has to dehydrate to make weight, he makes himself more vulnerable to injuries. And if a guy is one, two or even three weight divisions heavier than his opponent on fight night and can carry the weight comfortably, it's a huge benefit. You're heavier, you carry more power and your punches hurt more because you're the bigger man. Plus, you can absorb more punches as the bigger man.

If I were running a state commission, no matter what state, I would mandate same-day weigh-ins. This thing is bigger than people think.

Look at my state, Pennsylvania, where we have same-day weigh-ins. Same-day weigh-ins serve a simple function: You fight at the weight that you sign up to fight for. That's a big deal. The IBF has a mandatory same-day weigh-in where you can't be 10 pounds over the contracted weight. Golovkin came in around 170 (169.6 to be exact) and Danny Jacobs weighed as much as 180. HBO production people told me he didn't weigh in on their scale the day of the fight. He only weighed in when it mattered, the day before. And when it mattered, he made the weight.

I don't think that's fair. There is no way that in more than 24 hours – between the first and second weigh-ins – you should be over the 10-pound limit.

In addition to that, Danny was playing Russian roulette. Coming in bigger enabled him to absorb more shots but it could have slowed him down, too. This is important: 99.9 percent of fighters – and I mean young, old and in the middle – cut around 15 pounds leading up to fights. They're so used to thinking that it's the norm that when they're told that it damages their bodies, they don't believe it. These guys tell me all the time that what they put themselves through is OK.

I have no degree in any of this; same-day weigh-ins just make sense to me. Danny knew he was going to be bigger against GGG. That got into GGG's head, I can tell you. When GGG didn't hurt him, that had to play with him psychologically.

I want to be clear with this: Danny Jacobs' strategy was brilliant. Danny had to find any advantage he could gain. He lost the right to win the IBF belt but he didn't lose money and gained an advantage. Danny placed himself in a position to win.

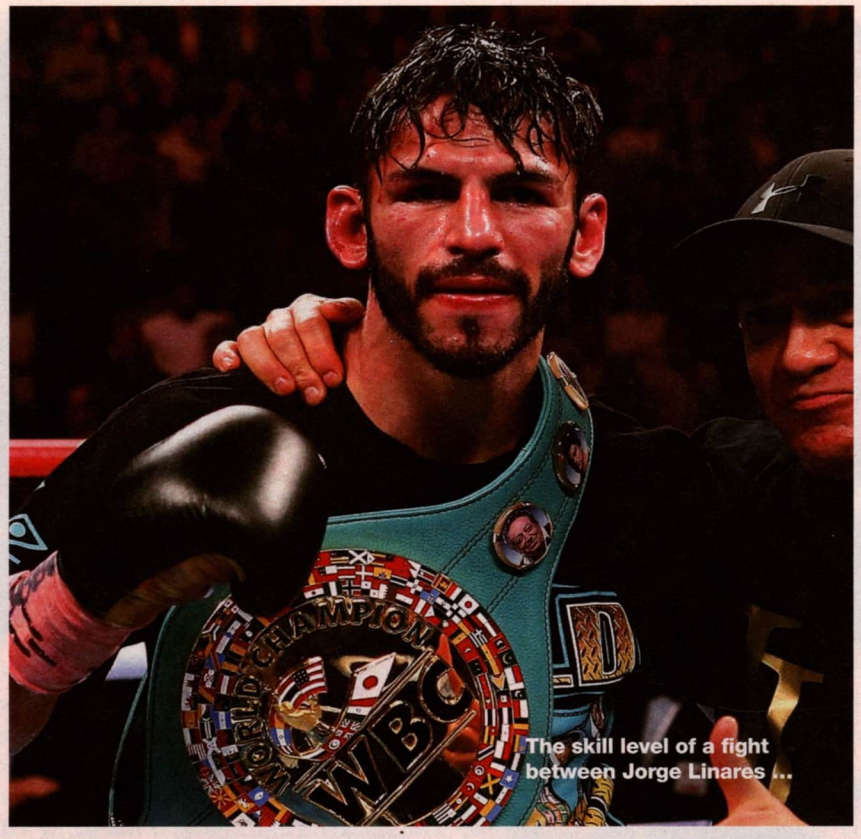
But if I weighed 160 for a title fight, you better believe the other guy is going to follow the rules and be the same weight.

If you stay in shape between fights, eat just enough so that you don't have to lose weight in a short period of time, you come in healthy and prepared. However, if you have 24 hours, you know you can pack on pounds and it forces your body to do something unnatural that close to a fight. It really is a disadvantage to guys who do stay in shape because their weight doesn't fluctuate as much. They don't need to rehydrate and don't have the ability to pack on the pounds because their body is stable.

Guys should fight in the weight classes in which they belong. That's what same-day weigh-ins do.

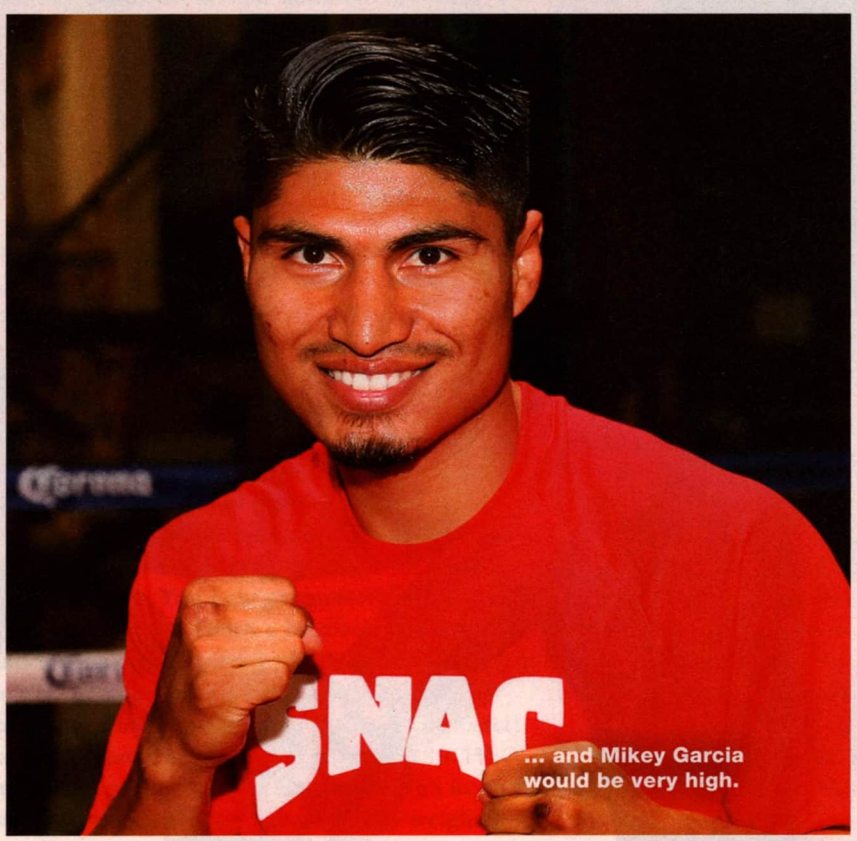
MATTHEW HEASLEY

Did Daniel Jacobs (right) have an unfair weight advantage over Gennady Golovkin?



The skill level of a fight between Jorge Linares ...

JORGE LINARES VS. MIKEY GARCIA


... and Mikey Garcia would be very high.

THREE EXPERTS – A FIGHTER, A TRAINER AND A MEDIA MEMBER – TELL YOU HOW A MYTHICAL MATCHUP WOULD PLAY OUT

In the media room following Jorge Linares' second decision victory over Anthony Crolla, it was the main topic of conversation among fight scribes: Linares had looked so dazzling in retaining his RING and WBA lightweight titles in March that a matchup against the superb Mikey Garcia now carried superfight status.

Two months earlier, Garcia, who currently holds the WBC title at 135 pounds, had made the type of statement that you rarely see in boxing. With only one other fight in three years because of a promotional dispute with Top Rank, the California native obliterated the previously unbeaten Dejan Zlaticanin inside three rounds. One powerful right hand knocked Zlaticanin cold and Garcia annexed his third divisional title.

Linares, who is also a three-division titleholder, is a fluid boxer and one of the best counterpunchers in the sport. The talented Venezuelan has so many weapons at his disposal that he can win fights convincingly without going through his entire repertoire. Garcia, brilliantly skilled himself, also brings state-of-the-art firepower to the party and can end matters in a flash.

Could Linares finesse Garcia and avoid the bombs? Or would Garcia solve the style and leave the older man looking up at the lights? Three boxing experts offer their opinions on the lightweight fight that everyone wants to see.

LINARES ★ TALE OF THE TAPE ★ GARCIA

135 POUNDS

LINARES		GARCIA
31	AGE	29
42-3 (27 KOS)	RECORD	36-0 (30 KOS)
60.0	KO PERCENTAGE	83.3
ORTHODOX	STANCE	ORTHODOX
5 FEET 8 INCHES (173 CM)	HEIGHT	5 FEET 6 INCHES (168 CM)
69 INCHES (175 CM)	REACH	68 INCHES (173 CM)

FIGHTER

TERRY FLANAGAN
WBO LIGHTWEIGHT TITLEHOLDER

I always knew that Garcia would knock out Zlaticanin. He just wasn't good enough. Zlaticanin was at least a level below and even though he was a world champion, he was the weakest of the bunch, in my opinion. Zlaticanin made his name by beating Ricky Burns, but Ricky took him lightly. With that said, Garcia's boxing skills are underrated because of his power. He has a great jab, good skills and he's just a great fighter. A matchup with Linares is not a walkover by any means but if I had to put money on it, I'd put it on Garcia to win by knockout. Linares was too crafty for Anthony (Crolla) in their rematch. Anthony didn't put it on him enough. Linares found his rhythm early and just outboxed him. His skills could cause Garcia problems early because he's classy, fast, sharp and he's got a good boxing brain. I just think Garcia will hurt him at some point in the fight and, when he does, he'll take him out. Garcia, other than myself, is probably the best in the lightweight division and I think he would stop Linares. After I come through my next fight against (Petr) Petrov, then I would be willing to fight either one of them. (Note: Flanagan beat Petrov by unanimous decision.)

PREDICTION: Garcia

TRAINER

SHANE MCGUIGAN
BWAA 2016 TRAINER OF THE YEAR

I think Linares has a fantastic skillset. He has great shot selection and he's obviously quite heavy-handed himself because he's able to be the boxer and control pace as well. The question marks about Linares are his chin and durability. He's got tired late on in fights and you had that in the back of your mind with Crolla the first time. It's just that Crolla isn't a world-class puncher. He's a decent puncher, but he didn't have the power to trouble Linares. Garcia is a completely different kettle of fish. It will be interesting to see how he handles frustration because Garcia is usually so calm and relaxed. He stalks people at his own pace and he's never had to rush in and show any kind of urgency. The first six rounds could be very tricky for him, and I can see Linares picking up a lot of those rounds and looking good. But then, as the fight goes on, Garcia's own heavy hands will come into play. He's such a calm and composed force coming forward and I think he'll land something heavy and take him out. Garcia had a bit of time out but he's shown no sign of ring rust and looks hungrier than ever.

PREDICTION: Garcia

MEDIA

MITCH ABRAMSON
THE RING

Linares is very gifted athletically and he can do a lot of things in the ring that other fighters can't. He's matured from being a very impressive physical specimen into an accomplished and experienced fighter. He's become craftier, too, and doesn't just rely on being athletic. Linares has become a much more well-rounded fighter and he put it all together against Anthony Crolla in his last fight. I think he's one of the most skilled fighters in the sport right now. The one question I would have is: How much power does Linares carry? He's more of a sharpshooter than a fighter who does one-punch damage. Garcia is very skilled, very balanced, his footwork is precise and he's always in position to punch or counter. He's so accurate and when he lands cleanly, he's able to hurt his opponents. We saw that against Dejan Zlaticanin, whom he annihilated with clean shots. We don't even know how good Garcia can be. Is he getting better? Has he only just scratched the surface? Against Linares, I see him winning by unanimous decision. I think Mikey would be able to neutralize Linares' speed and slow him down. I just think that Garcia, fundamentally, is a little bit better than Linares and just a bit classier in general.

PREDICTION: Garcia

THE NEVERENDING STORY

Adrien Broner makes more news outside the ring than in it.

Adrien Broner added another mugshot to his growing collection in mid-April, this time after police discovered an open warrant when his rented Suburban was pulled over because of the still-smoking bullet holes in its side.

Let's pull out the photo album, pour a glass of Cristal and perp-walk down memory lane ...

- 2007 – Charged with aggravated robbery and felonious assault (made bail but soon after violated the terms and was again charged with assault).
- 2008 – Charged with carrying a concealed revolver, separately charged for intimidating a witness while awaiting trial (cases dismissed along with another for domestic violence).
- 2010 – Robbery (dismissed)
- 2012 – Assault and battery (dismissed).
- 2013 – Assault and battery, which included allegedly biting a man (dismissed).
- 2014 – Public intoxication and disorderly conduct (charges that led to the latest warrant).
- 2015 – Drunk driving charges (received probation, which he violated in 2016 by driving recklessly while in Ohio to turn himself in for allegedly beating a man outside a bowling alley and stealing $14,000. He did 10 days in jail for the reckless driving but everything else was dismissed. In October there were accusations of choking a waitress.

Interspersed are images of Broner's face surrounded by a pirate's fantasy of gold and diamonds, crisp greenbacks raining down on a stripper stage and others swirling down a toilet. And a sex tape. And world titles in four divisions.

And now, just three months after a Showtime-televised interview in which he said, "It's time to grow up and be the role model and the icon that I am," this: Broner left GMoni's Bar in Cincinnati, at some point was peppered with a clip of 9mm slugs (eight of which hit the SUV, according to police) and was crossing into Kentucky when he was pulled over. He wasn't hurt. No suspects have been identified and no motive has been ascribed, just rumors about an altercation. Broner was scheduled – and with him that guarantees nothing – to appear in court on April 27.

In late March, **Juan Manuel Marquez** (remember him?) filed suit against Chase bank and a father/son duo of tax preparers involved in what the Department of Justice has described as "the largest tax refund fraud in history." **Adel and Heber Cotton** are among the 53 people thus far convicted for the $250 million scheme, in which bank employees were complicit in filing false tax returns and collecting the refunds, and are already in prison. Marquez alleges they stole $2.3 million from him by opening fake accounts and having the IRS mail checks from 2012 and 2013 directly to themselves.

Nick Durandt died in a motorcycle crash on April 21 in South Africa at the age of 53, perfectly cast as president of the Crusaders Bike Club with his sleeve tattoos, jewelry and the blond hair spilling over his shoulders. He was also a trainer with a staggering legacy that reportedly includes 95 South African champions spread between every weight division; reigning titleholder **Zolani Tete;** former titleholders **Cassius Baloyi, Isaac Hlatshwayo and Masibulele Makepula**; and former world title challengers **Silence Mabuza** and **Phillip Ndou.**

Former holder of many super middleweight titles **Mikkel Kessler,** who hasn't fought since a loss to Carl Froch four years ago, has announced his return to the ring. Nothing had been lined up for the 38-year-old "Viking Warrior" by press time, but yes, Froch has been asked and has said if there's anything that could end his own retirement, "it is a decider with Mikkel Kessler."

Dubai has been mentioned a lot recently as a potential boxing hotbed, and **Mike Tyson** has jumped on board by choosing it as the launching point for his latest eponymous venture, the Mike Tyson Academy (fitness, not culinary), which reportedly already has plans to open franchises in several locations around the world.

"I'd fight Mike Tyson for a million bucks" was a familiar dumbass thing to say in the '90s, but thankfully TV producers still had some restraint in those days. If you're in Japan on May 7, you can fight **Koki Kameda**, though. The former titleholder will supposedly take on all comers, with anyone able to beat him taking home 10 million yen (around $92,000). The only requirements are that you be under 5 feet 9 inches tall and less than 154 pounds. (Sorry, Mr. Tyson.)

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FIGHTER OF THE MONTH

ANTHONY JOSHUA

By **Michael Rosenthal**

Anthony Joshua had reason to be proud of himself after his sensational victory over Wladimir Klitschko.

AP

Anthony Joshua couldn't have written a more gripping script for the biggest fight of his career.

He engaged in a thrilling brawl with a future Hall of Famer in front of 90,000 rabid fans in his hometown of London. He faced and overcame major adversity for the first time. And he emerged with a dramatic knockout.

Not a bad night's work.

The most impressive aspect of Joshua's performance against Wladimir Klitschko was his resilience, as he had to bounce back from a sixth-round knockdown and a few rounds in which he seemed to be depleted of energy.

For a time, he seemed in serious jeopardy of losing everything he'd built the past few years.

However, he recovered sufficiently to take control of the fight down the stretch and score a brutal knockout in the 11th round, putting a brave Klitschko down twice and rendering him unable to continue.

With the victory, Joshua remained unbeaten, successfully defended his IBF title and won the vacant WBA belt.

More important, he did what he set out to do: He won universal recognition as the top heavyweight in the world in part because of unbeaten but troubled Tyson Fury's hiatus from boxing.

Indeed, the torch was passed from the dominant heavyweight of the past decade-plus to the fighter many believe has the ability to carve out his own lengthy reign as the best big man in the world.

We'll see if rivals Fury and Deontay Wilder can alter that scenario. RING

POUND FOR POUND: No changes.

HEAVYWEIGHTS: Anthony Joshua (No. 5 last month) brought honor back to the word "hype" with his 11th-round knockout of Wladimir Klitschko (No. 1 at the time) at Wembley Stadium in London. The hometown kid rose to No. 1 and valiant Wlad slipped to No. 3.

CRUISERWEIGHTS: Marco Huck (No. 6 last month) lost a point for head-butting but it had no bearing on his fight against Mairis Briedis, who easily won on the cards and took home the WBC title. Briedis (No. 7 last month) jumped to No. 4 and Huck dropped to No. 7.

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS: Relative rookie Oleksandr Gvozdyk reassured his supporters and moved up one notch (from No. 8 to No. 7) with an impressive third-round TKO of Yunieski Gonzalez (unrated).

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS: No. 2-rated Badou Jack was removed due to his plans at 175 pounds, so everyone moved up and Jesse Hart entered at No. 10.

MIDDLEWEIGHTS: Maciej Sulecki (No. 9 last month) took the road less traveled and moved down in weight, clearing a spot at No. 10 for undefeated Ukrainian Sergiy Derevyanchenko. Two weeks later, raging bulldog Avtandil Khurtsidze went from No. 8 to No. 7 after smashing through Tommy Langford (unrated) in five rounds.

JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHTS: No. 1-rated Canelo Alvarez announced he would no longer fight at 154 and exited the list. Everyone formerly below him gained a notch and perennial lurker Vanes Martirosyan returned at No. 10. Jermell Charlo inched closer to the top (from No. 3 to No. 2) with a sixth-round knockout of unrated Charles Hatley, and Michel Soro (No. 8 last month) advanced to No. 7 after stopping Javier Maciel (unrated) in three.

WELTERWEIGHTS: No changes.

JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHTS: Undefeated Namibian Julius Indongo unified two titles and gained some believers with his 12-round rout of Ricky Burns. Burns dropped from No. 4 to the brink at No. 10 while Indongo (No. 6 last month) surged to No. 2.

LIGHTWEIGHTS: No. 1-rated Jorge Linares was too smooth and skillful in his rematch with Anthony Crolla, who fell from No. 8 to No. 4 after losing a wide unanimous decision. Petr Petrov (No. 10) was replaced by Raymundo Beltran after losing on the cards to Terry Flanagan, who held his ground at No. 2.

JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHTS: It almost seems cruel to hold it against him, but Jason Sosa's knockout loss to Vasyl Lomachenko (No. 1 then and now) resulted in his replacement at No. 10 by Philadelphia's Tevin Farmer. Three weekends later, Farmer climbed to No. 9 after outpointing Arturo Santos Reyes (unrated).

FEATHERWEIGHTS: Titleholder Oscar Valdez (No. 7 last month) continued to impress with a unanimous decision over Miguel Marriaga (unrated) and was lifted to No. 6.

JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHTS: Japan's Shun Kubo quashed Nehomar Cermeno's recent resurgence with a 10th-round stoppage and took the No. 10 spot from Jonathan Guzman. Genesis Servania (No. 4 last month) was then removed for rising in weight and undefeated Californian Randy Caballero arrived at No. 10.

BANTAMWEIGHTS: Zolani Tete (No. 8 last month) jumped to No. 6 after nearly shutting out Arthur Villanueva (unrated). That same week, No. 5-rated Marlon Tapales left for 122 and Puerto Rican Emmanuel Rodriguez took the space created at No. 10.

JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHTS: No changes.

FLYWEIGHTS: No. 2-rated Johnriel Casimero departed for 115, which lifted others on the list and left No. 10 vacant for Moruti Mthalane, who returned from a 16-month hiatus with a fourth-round knockout of Genisis Libranza (unrated).

JUNIOR FLYWEIGHTS: No changes.

STRAWWEIGHTS: After being a title magnet for more than 16 years, Katsunari Takayama cashed in his chips and left the game ranked at No. 5. Young countryman Hiroto Kyoguchi, who would win his seventh pro fight the following week, stepped in at No. 10.

Oleksandr Usyk (right) maintained his momentum with a onesided decision over Michael Hunter on April 8.

THE FIGURES UNDER THE FIGHTERS' NAMES INDICATE: WEEKS IN THE RATINGS • COUNTRY • RECORD

HEAVYWEIGHTS
WEIGHT UNLIMITED

C TYSON FURY
272 • U.K. • 25-0-0 (18 KOs)

1. **ANTHONY JOSHUA**
79 • U.K. • 19-0-0 (19 KOs)
2. **DEONTAY WILDER**
180 • U.S. • 38-0-0 (37 KOs)
3. **WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO**
624 • Ukraine • 64-5-0 (53 KOs)
4. **KUBRAT PULEV**
290 • Bulgaria • 25-1-0 (13 KOs)
5. **LUIS ORTIZ**
72 • Cuba • 27-0-0 (23 KOs)
6. **JOSEPH PARKER**
56 • New Zealand • 22-0-0 (18 KOs)
7. **ANDY RUIZ JR.**
48 • Mexico • 29-1-0 (19 KOs)
8. **DILLIAN WHYTE**
20 • U.K. • 20-1-0 (15 KOs)
9. **DOMINIC BREAZEALE**
10 • U.S. • 18-1-0 (16 KOs)
10. **JARRELL MILLER**
9 • U.S. • 18-0-1 (16 KOs)

CRUISERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 200 LBS

C (VACANT)

1. **OLEKSANDR USYK**
83 • Ukraine • 12-0-0 (10 KOs)
2. **MURAT GASSIEV**
25 • Russia • 24-0-0 (17 KOs)
3. **TONY BELLEW**
50 • U.K. • 29-2-1 (19 KOs)
4. **MAIRIS BRIEDIS**
62 • Latvia • 22-0-0 (18 KOs)
5. **DENIS LEBEDEV**
379 • Russia • 29-3-0 (22 KOs)
6. **KRZYSZTOF GLOWACKI**
90 • Poland • 26-1-0 (16 KOs)
7. **MARCO HUCK**
269 • Germany • 40-4-1 (27 KOs)
8. **FIRAT ARSLAN**
235 • Germany • 39-8-2 (24 KOs)
9. **ILUNGA MAKABU**
199 • Congo • 19-2-0 (18 KOs)
10. **YUNIER DORTICOS**
50 • Cuba • 21-0-0 (20 KOs)

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 175 LBS

C (VACANT)

1. **ANDRE WARD**
58 • U.S. • 31-0-0 (15 KOs)
2. **SERGEY KOVALEV**
224 • Russia • 30-1-1 (26 KOs)
3. **ADONIS STEVENSON**
204 • Canada • 28-1-0 (23 KOs)
4. **ELEIDER ALVAREZ**
164 • Colombia • 22-0-0 (11 KOs)
5. **ARTUR BETERBIEV**
125 • Russia • 11-0-0 (11 KOs)
6. **JOE SMITH JR.**
46 • U.S. • 23-1-0 (19 KOs)
7. **OLEKSANDR GVOZDYK**
24 • Ukraine • 13-0-0 (11 KOs)
8. **NATHAN CLEVERLY**
31 • U.K. • 30-3-0 (16 KOs)
9. **SULLIVAN BARRERA**
20 • Cuba • 19-1-0 (14 KOs)
10. **MARCUS BROWNE**
11 • U.S. • 19-0-0 (14 KOs)

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 168 LBS

C (VACANT)

1. **JAMES DEGALE**
204 • U.K. • 23-1-1 (14 KOs)
2. **GILBERTO RAMIREZ**
147 • Mexico • 35-0-0 (24 KOs)
3. **GEORGE GROVES**
282 • U.K. • 25-3-0 (18 KOs)
4. **ANDRE DIRRELL**
140 • U.S. • 25-2-0 (16 KOs)
5. **CALLUM SMITH**
100 • U.K. • 22-0-0 (17 KOs)
6. **ANTHONY DIRRELL**
142 • U.S. • 30-1-1 (24 KOs)
7. **ARTHUR ABRAHAM**
395 • Armenia • 46-5-0 (30 KOs)
8. **FEDOR CHUDINOV**
104 • Russia • 14-1-0 (10 KOs)
9. **TYRON ZEUGE**
25 • Germany • 20-0-1 (11 KOs)
10. **JESSE HART**
2 • U.S. • 22-0-0 (18 KOs)

MIKEY WILLIAMS/TOP RANK

MIDDLEWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 160 LBS

C CANELO ALVAREZ
76 • Mexico • 48-1-1 (34 KOs)

1. GENNADY GOLOVKIN
282 • Kaz. • 37-0-0 (33 KOs)

2. DANIEL JACOBS
125 • U.S. • 32-2-0 (29 KOs)

3. DAVID LEMIEUX
101 • Canada • 37-3-0 (33 KOs)

4. BILLY JOE SAUNDERS
127 • U.K. • 24-0-0 (12 KOs)

5. ANDY LEE
125 • Ireland • 35-3-1 (24 KOs)

6. CHRIS EUBANK JR.
108 • U.K. • 24-1-0 (19 KOs)

7. AVTANDIL KHURTSIDZE
61 • Georgia • 33-2-2 (22 KOs)

8. HASSAN N'DAM
172 • Cameroon • 35-2-0 (21 KOs)

9. RYOTA MURATA
18 • Japan • 12-0-0 (9 KOs)

10. SERGIY DEREVYANCHENKO
4 • Ukraine • 10-0-0 (8 KOs)

JR. MIDDLEWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 154 LBS

C (VACANT)

1. ERISLANDY LARA
305 • Cuba • 24-2-2 (14 KOs)

2. JERMELL CHARLO
182 • U.S. • 29-0-0 (14 KOs)

3. MIGUEL COTTO
76 • P.R. • 40-5-0 (33 KOs)

4. DEMETRIUS ANDRADE
81 • U.S. • 24-0-0 (16 KOs)

5. AUSTIN TROUT
257 • U.S. • 30-3-0 (17 KOs)

6. JARRETT HURD
25 • U.S. • 20-0-0 (14 KOs)

7. MICHEL SORO
20 • France • 30-1-1 (20 KOs)

8. LIAM SMITH
86 • U.K. • 25-1-1 (14 KOs)

9. ERICKSON LUBIN
9 • U.S. • 18-0-0 (13 KOs)

10. VANES MARTIROSYAN
4 • U.S. • 36-3-1 (21 KOs)

WELTERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 147 LBS

C (VACANT)

1. KEITH THURMAN
217 • U.S. • 28-0-0 (22 KOs)

2. KELL BROOK
315 • U.K. • 36-1-0 (25 KOs)

3. SHAWN PORTER
178 • U.S. • 27-2-1 (17 KOs)

4. MANNY PACQUIAO
26 • Phil. • 59-6-2 (38 KOs)

5. TIM BRADLEY
256 • U.S. • 33-2-1 (13 KOs)

6. AMIR KHAN
157 • U.K. • 31-4-0 (19 KOs)

7. ERROL SPENCE
83 • U.S. • 21-0-0 (18 KOs)

8. DANNY GARCIA
92 • U.S. • 33-1-0 (19 KOs)

9. JESSIE VARGAS
61 • U.S. • 27-2-0 (10 KOs)

10. LAMONT PETERSON
11 • U.S. • 35-3-1 (17 KOs)

JR. WELTERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 140 LBS

C TERENCE CRAWFORD
107 • U.S. • 30-0-0 (21 KOs)

1. VIKTOR POSTOL
194 • Ukraine • 28-1-0 (12 KOs)

2. JULIUS INDONGO
22 • Namibia • 22-0-0 (11 KOs)

3. ANTONIO OROZCO
83 • U.S. • 26-0-0 (17 KOs)

4. ADRIAN GRANADOS
61 • U.S. • 18-5-2 (12 KOs)

5. REGIS PROGRAIS
41 • U.S. • 19-0-0 (16 KOs)

6. JACK CATTERALL
58 • U.K. • 18-0-0 (10 KOs)

7. EDUARD TROYANOVSKY
75 • Russia • 25-1-0 (22 KOs)

8. SERGEY LIPINETS
21 • Russia • 12-0-0 (10 KOs)

9. ANTHONY YIGIT
12 • Sweden • 19-0-1 (7 KOs)

10. RICKY BURNS
49 • U.K. • 41-6-1 (14 KOs)

LIGHTWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 135 LBS

C JORGE LINARES
165 • Venezuela • 42-3-0 (27 KOs)

1. MIKEY GARCIA
14 • U.S. • 36-0-0 (30 KOs)

2. TERRY FLANAGAN
82 • U.K. • 33-0-0 (13 KOs)

3. ROBERT EASTER
57 • U.S. • 19-0-0 (14 KOs)

4. DENIS SHAFIKOV
108 • Russia • 38-2-1 (20 KOs)

5. SHARIF BOGERE
131 • Uganda • 29-1-0 (20 KOs)

6. RICHARD COMMEY
101 • Ghana • 25-2-0 (22 KOs)

7. FELIX VERDEJO
55 • Puerto Rico • 23-0-0 (15 KOs)

8. ANTHONY CROLLA
80 • U.K. • 31-6-3 (13 KOs)

9. DEJAN ZLATICANIN
108 • Montenegro • 22-1-0 (15 KOs)

10. RAYMUNDO BELTRAN
4 • Mexico • 32-7-1 (20 KOs)

JR. LIGHTWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 130 LBS

C (VACANT)

1. VASYL LOMACHENKO
47 • Ukraine • 8-1-0 (6 KOs)

2. ORLANDO SALIDO
137 • Mexico • 43-13-4 (30 KOs)

3. JEZREEL CORRALES
53 • Panama • 21-1-0 (8 KOs)

4. MIGUEL BERCHELT
14 • Mexico • 31-1-0 (28 KOs)

5. TAKASHI MIURA
213 • Japan • 31-3-2 (24 KOs)

6. GERVONTA DAVIS
16 • U.S. • 17-0-0 (16 KOs)

7. TAKASHI UCHIYAMA
383 • Japan • 24-2-1 (20 KOs)

8. FRANCISCO VARGAS
147 • Mexico • 23-1-2 (17 KOs)

9. TEVIN FARMER
4 • U.S. • 25-4-1 (5 KOs)

10. ROMAN MARTINEZ
452 • P.R. • 29-3-3 (17 KOs)

FEATHERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 126 LBS

C (VACANT)

1. LEO SANTA CRUZ
88 • U.S. • 33-1-1 (18 KOs)

2. GARY RUSSELL JR.
110 • U.S. • 27-1-0 (16 KOs)

3. CARL FRAMPTON
40 • U.K. • 23-1-0 (14 KOs)

4. LEE SELBY
164 • U.K. • 24-1-0 (9 KOs)

5. ABNER MARES
209 • Mexico • 30-2-1 (15 KOs)

6. OSCAR VALDEZ
56 • Mexico • 22-0-0 (19 KOs)

7. SIMPIWE VETYEKA
178 • S. Africa • 29-3-0 (17 KOs)

8. JOSEPH DIAZ JR.
58 • U.S. • 23-0-0 (13 KOs)

9. JESUS CUELLAR
134 • Argentina • 28-2-0 (21 KOs)

10. JORGE LARA
30 • Mexico • 28-0-2 (20 KOs)

JR. FEATHERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 122 LBS

C (VACANT)

1. GUILLERMO RIGONDEAUX
339 • Cuba • 17-0-0 (11 KOs)

2. JESSIE MAGDALENO
99 • U.S. • 25-0-0 (18 KOs)

3. REY VARGAS
125 • Mexico • 29-0-0 (22 KOs)

4. NONITO DONAIRE
110 • Phil. • 37-4-0 (24 KOs)

5. MOISES FLORES
43 • Mexico • 25-0-0 (17 KOs)

6. DIEGO DE LA HOYA
40 • Mexico • 17-0-0 (9 KOs)

7. HUGO RUIZ
21 • Mexico • 36-4-0 (32 KOs)

8. YUKINORI OGUNI
18 • Japan • 19-1-1 (7 KOs)

9. SHUN KUBO
4 • Japan • 12-0-0 (9 KOs)

10. RANDY CABALLERO
1 • U.S. • 24-0-0 (14 KOs)

HOW OUR RATINGS ARE COMPILED

Championship vacancies can be filled in the following two ways: 1. THE RING's Nos. 1 and 2 contenders fight one another. 2. If the Nos. 1 and 2 contenders choose not to fight one another and No. 1 fights No. 3, that matchup could be for the RING title if the Editorial Board deems No. 3 worthy.

A champion can lose his belt in six situations: 1. The Champion loses a fight in the weight class in which he is champion; 2. The Champion moves to another weight class; 3. The Champion does not schedule a fight in any weight class for 18 months, although injuries and certain other unforeseen circumstances could be taken into consideration; 4. The Champion does not schedule a fight at his champion weight for 18 months (even if he fights at another weight); 5. The Champion does not schedule a fight with a Top-5 contender from any weight class for two years; 6. The Champion retires.

THE RING Editorial Board considers input from the Ratings Panel of boxing journalists from around the world and then decides collectively what changes will be made. That applies to both the pound-for-pound and divisional ratings.

Records provided by boxrec.com

RING RATINGS

BANTAMWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 118 LBS

C SHINSUKE YAMANAKA
287 • Japan • 27-0-2 (19 KOs)

1. JAMIE MCDONNELL
209 • U.K. • 29-2-1 (13 KOs)

2. JUAN CARLOS PAYANO
136 • Dom. Rep. • 18-1-0 (9 KOs)

3. LEE HASKINS
99 • U.K. • 34-3-0 (14 KOs)

4. ANSELMO MORENO
475 • Panama • 36-5-1 (12 KOs)

5. ZHANAT ZHAKIYANOV
12 • Kaz. • 27-1-0 (18 KOs)

6. ZOLANI TETE
60 • S. Africa • 25-3-0 (20 KOs)

7. RAU'SHEE WARREN
45 • U.S. • 14-2-0 (4 KOs)

8. LUIS NERY
40 • Mexico • 23-0-0 (17 KOs)

9. LIBORIO SOLIS
8 • Venezuela • 25-5-1 (11 KOs)

10. EMMANUEL RODRIGUEZ
2 • P.R. • 16-0-0 (11 KOs)

JR. BANTAMWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 115 LBS

C (VACANT)

1. NAOYA INOUE
122 • Japan • 12-0-0 (10 KOs)

2. SRISAKET SOR RUNGVISAI
209 • Thailand • 43-4-1 (39 KOs)

3. ROMAN GONZALEZ
34 • Nicaragua • 46-1-0 (38 KOs)

4. CARLOS CUADRAS
258 • Mexico • 36-1-1 (27 KOs)

5. JUAN FRANCISCO ESTRADA
30 • Mexico • 35-2-0 (25 KOs)

6. KHALID YAFAI
60 • U.K. • 21-0-0 (14 KOs)

7. LUIS CONCEPCION
85 • Panama • 35-5-0 (24 KOs)

8. JERWIN ANCAJAS
35 • Phil. • 26-1-1 (17 KOs)

9. MCJOE ARROYO
151 • P.R. • 17-1-0 (8 KOs)

10. KOHEI KONO
81 • Japan • 32-10-1 (13 KOs)

FLYWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 112 LBS

C (VACANT)

1. KAZUTO IOKA
138 • Japan • 22-1-0 (13 KOs)

2. DONNIE NIETES
32 • Phil. • 40-1-4 (22 KOs)

3. AMNAT RUENROENG
156 • Thailand • 17-1-0 (5 KOs)

4. JUAN CARLOS REVECO
292 • Argentina • 38-3-0 (19 KOs)

5. MCWILLIAMS ARROYO
139 • P.R. • 16-3-0 (14 KOs)

6. ZOU SHIMING
26 • China • 9-1-0 (2 KOs)

7. DAIGO HIGA
31 • Japan • 12-0-0 (12 KOs)

8. VINCENT LEGRAND
12 • France • 24-0-0 (14 KOs)

9. JUAN HERNANDEZ
9 • Mexico • 34-2-0 (25 KOs)

10. MORUTI MTHALANE
1 • S. Africa • 33-2-0 (22 KOs)

JR. FLYWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 108 LBS

C (VACANT)

1. PEDRO GUEVARA
214 • Mexico • 29-2-1 (17 KOs)

2. AKIRA YAEGASHI
70 • Japan • 25-5-0 (13 KOs)

3. GANIGAN LOPEZ
61 • Mexico • 28-6-0 (17 KOs)

4. KOSEI TANAKA
18 • Japan • 8-0-0 (5 KOs)

5. RYOICHI TAGUCHI
125 • Japan • 25-2-2 (11 KOs)

6. CARLOS CANIZALES
17 • Venezuela • 17-0-1 (14 KOs)

7. RANDY PETALCORIN
156 • Phil. • 26-2-1 (19 KOs)

8. MILAN MELINDO
129 • Phil. • 35-2-0 (12 KOs)

9. HEKKIE BUDLER
28 • S. Africa • 31-2-0 (10 KOs)

10. KEN SHIRO
23 • Japan • 9-0-0 (5 KOs)

STRAWWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 105 LBS

C (VACANT)

1. WANHENG MENAYOTHIN
307 • Thailand • 46-0-0 (17 KOs)

2. KNOCKOUT CP FRESHMART
135 • Thailand • 15-0-0 (7 KOs)

3. BYRON ROJAS
59 • Nicaragua • 18-3-3 (8 KOs)

4. JOSE ARGUMEDO
70 • Mexico • 19-3-1 (11 KOs)

5. CARLOS BUITRAGO
238 • Nicaragua • 30-2-1 (17 KOs)

6. RIKU KANO
49 • Japan • 11-2-1 (6 KOs)

7. SIMPHIWE KHONCO
28 • S. Africa • 17-5-0 (7 KOs)

8. SAUL JUAREZ
43 • Mexico • 23-5-1 (12 KOs)

9. RYUYA YAMANAKA
25 • Japan • 14-2-0 (4 KOs)

10. HIROTO KYOGUCHI
3 • Japan • 7-0-0 (6 KOs)

POUND FOR POUND

1. ANDRE WARD
86 • U.S. • 31-0-0 (15 KOs)

2. SERGEY KOVALEV
112 • Russia • 30-1-1 (26 KOs)

3. GENNADY GOLOVKIN
116 • Kazakhstan • 37-0-0 (33 KOs)

4. ROMAN GONZALEZ
152 • Nicaragua • 46-1-0 (38 KOs)

5. TERENCE CRAWFORD
105 • U.S. • 30-0-0 (21 KOs)

6. VASYL LOMACHENKO
46 • Ukraine • 8-1-0 (6 KOs)

7. GUILLERMO RIGONDEAUX
193 • Cuba • 17-0-0 (11 KOs)

8. CANELO ALVAREZ
76 • Mexico • 48-1-1 (34 KOs)

9. SHINSUKE YAMANAKA
103 • Japan • 27-0-2 (19 KOs)

10. NAOYA INOUE
14 • Japan • 12-0-0 (10 KOs)

THE RING POLICY ON RATED BOXERS WHO TEST POSITIVE FOR PERFORMANCE-ENHANCING DRUGS

THE RING will remove from its ratings any rated boxer — including a champion — if such boxer at some point undergoes drug testing (Olympic-style or otherwise) and that boxer tests positive for a performance-enhancing drug.

In the event that a boxer has undergone testing in which the boxer provides two samples ("A" and "B") and the boxer's "A" and subsequent "B" samples test positive for a performance-enhancing drug or if his "A" sample tests positive and he waives his right to have the "B" sample tested, then the boxer shall immediately be removed from the ratings.

A boxer whose "A" sample tested positive and is awaiting the results of his "B" sample will not be allowed to fight for a championship or rise in the ratings.

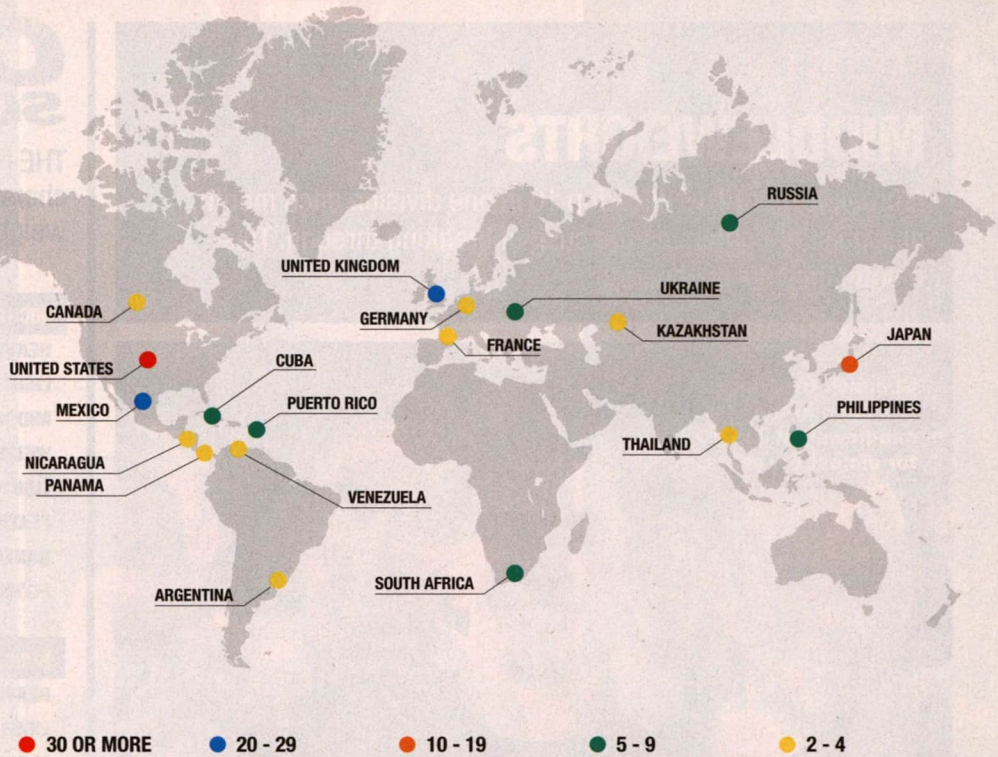
A boxer who is removed because of a positive test will have the opportunity to earn his way back into the ratings after any suspension period is completed.

A boxer who is dropped also may be reinstated if the testing agency subsequently reverses its decision or a court of competent jurisdiction finds that the test result was invalid.

RATED FIGHTERS BY COUNTRY

UNITED STATES	37	▲ 3
MEXICO	22	
UNITED KINGDOM	22	
JAPAN	17	▲ 1
RUSSIA	8	▼ 1
PHILIPPINES	6	▼ 3
PUERTO RICO	6	▲ 1
UKRAINE	5	▲ 1
CUBA	5	
SOUTH AFRICA	5	▲ 1
THAILAND	4	
GERMANY	3	
NICARAGUA	3	
PANAMA	3	
VENEZUELA	3	
ARGENTINA	2	
CANADA	2	
FRANCE	2	
KAZAKHSTAN	2	
ARMENIA	1	
BULGARIA	1	
CAMEROON	1	
CHINA	1	
COLOMBIA	1	
CONGO	1	
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC	1	▼ 1
GEORGIA	1	
GHANA	1	
IRELAND	1	
LATVIA	1	
MONTENEGRO	1	
NAMIBIA	1	
NEW ZEALAND	1	
POLAND	1	▼ 1
SWEDEN	1	▼ 1
UGANDA	1	

Countries out (from last month): *None*
• ***Countries in:*** *None*



U.K. VS. EUROPE

The U.K. is in the process of extricating itself from the European Union as a result of its recent Brexit vote. The Brits long ago separated themselves from their Euro counterparts in terms of the RING Ratings. The U.K. has 22 rated fighters, 13 more than No. 2 Russia. Here is how the U.K. compares to the other European nations.

DIVISION	U.K.	EUROPE
HEAVYWEIGHTS	3	2
CRUISERWEIGHTS	1	7
LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS	1	3
SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS	3	3
MIDDLEWEIGHTS	2	4
JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHTS	1	1
WELTERWEIGHTS	2	0
JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHTS	2	4
LIGHTWEIGHTS	2	2
JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHTS	0	1
FEATHERWEIGHTS	2	0
JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHTS	0	0
BANTAMWEIGHTS	2	1
JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHTS	1	0
FLYWEIGHTS	0	1
JUNIOR FLYWEIGHTS	0	0
STRAWWEIGHTS	0	0
TOTAL	22	29

Note: *Armenia, Georgia, Kazakhstan and Russia all straddle Europe and Asia but are considered European countries for the purpose of this chart.*

WINNERS

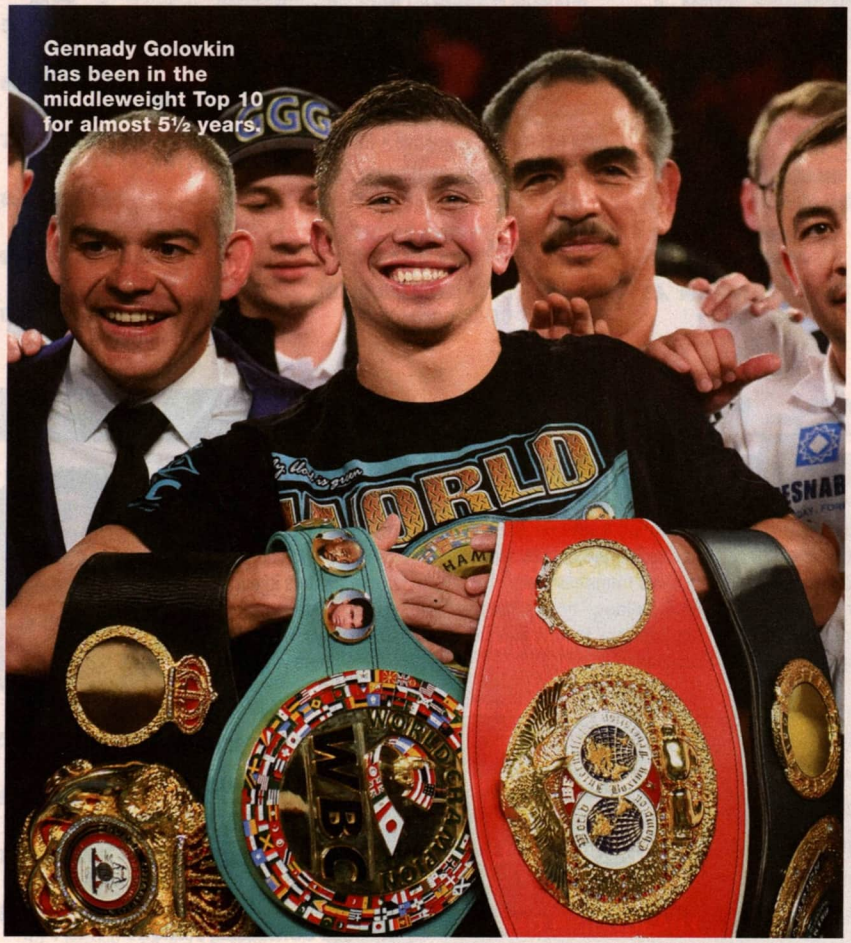
The only way to get into the RING Ratings is to win. And no current fighters in our ratings have won more than these guys. Here are the rated fighters with the most victories.

64 WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO, HEAVYWEIGHT
59 MANNY PACQUIAO, WELTERWEIGHT
48 CANELO ALVAREZ, MIDDLEWEIGHT
46 ARTHUR ABRAHAM, SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHT
46 ROMAN GONZALEZ, JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHT
46 WANHENG MENAYOTHIN, STRAWWEIGHT
43 ORLANDO SALIDO, JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHT
43 SRISAKET SOR RUNGVISAI, JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHT
42 JORGE LINARES, LIGHTWEIGHT
41 RICKY BURNS, JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHT
40 MIGUEL COTTO, JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHT
40 MARCO HUCK, CRUISERWEIGHT
40 DONNIE NIETES, FLYWEIGHT
39 FIRAT ARSLAN, CRUISERWEIGHT
38 JUAN CARLOS REVECO, FLYWEIGHT
38 DENIS SHAFIKOV, LIGHTWEIGHT
38 DEONTAY WILDER, HEAVYWEIGHT

FOCUS ON . . .

MIDDLEWEIGHTS

A breakdown of THE RING Top 10 in one division each month, plus a list of fighters on the cusp of breaking through. This month: the 160-pounders.



Gennady Golovkin has been in the middleweight Top 10 for almost 5½ years.

MOST WEEKS RATED: GENNADY GOLOVKIN **282**

FEWEST WEEKS RATED: SERGIY DEREVYANCHENKO **4**

OLDEST: AVTANDIL KHURTSIDZE **38**

YOUNGEST: CHRIS EUBANK JR. **27**

MOST FIGHTS: CANELO ALVAREZ **50**

FEWEST FIGHTS: DEREVYANCHENKO **10**

HIGHEST WINNING PERCENTAGE: DEREVYANCHENKO, GOLOVKIN, RYOTA MURATA, BILLY JOE SAUNDERS **100 PERCENT**

LOWEST WINNING PERCENTAGE: KHURTSIDZE **89.2 PERCENT**

MOST KOS: ALVAREZ **34**

FEWEST KOS: DEREVYANCHENKO **8**

LONGEST CURRENT WINNING STREAK: GOLOVKIN **37 FIGHTS**

ON THE POUND-FOR-POUND LIST: GOLOVKIN **(NO. 3)**, ALVAREZ **(NO. 8)**

TITLEHOLDERS IN THE TOP 10: ALVAREZ **(RING)**, GOLOVKIN **(IBF, WBA, WBC)**, SAUNDERS **(WBO)**

ON THE CUSP (IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER): AZIZBEK ABDUGOFUROV, IMMANUWEL ALEEM, LUIS ARIAS, JASON QUIGLEY, WILLIE MONROE JR.

OLD SCHOOL 8

THE RING staff members' current champions in the original eight weight classes.

MICHAEL ROSENTHAL RING MAGAZINE EDITOR

HEAVYWEIGHT: TYSON FURY
LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHT: ANDRE WARD
MIDDLEWEIGHT: GENNADY GOLOVKIN
WELTERWEIGHT: TERENCE CRAWFORD
LIGHTWEIGHT: VASYL LOMACHENKO
FEATHERWEIGHT: LEO SANTA CRUZ
BANTAMWEIGHT: SHINSUKE YAMANAKA
FLYWEIGHT: KAZUTO IOKA

DOUG FISCHER RINGTV.COM EDITOR

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LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHT: SERGEY KOVALEV
MIDDLEWEIGHT: GENNADY GOLOVKIN
WELTERWEIGHT: KEITH THURMAN
LIGHTWEIGHT: VASYL LOMACHENKO
FEATHERWEIGHT: LEO SANTA CRUZ
BANTAMWEIGHT: SHINSUKE YAMANAKA
FLYWEIGHT: KAZUTO IOKA

BRIAN HARTY RING MAGAZINE MANAGING EDITOR

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LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHT: SERGEY KOVALEV
MIDDLEWEIGHT: GENNADY GOLOVKIN
WELTERWEIGHT: TERENCE CRAWFORD
LIGHTWEIGHT: VASYL LOMACHENKO
FEATHERWEIGHT: LEO SANTA CRUZ
BANTAMWEIGHT: SHINSUKE YAMANAKA
FLYWEIGHT: DONNIE NIETES

MITCH ABRAMSON STAFF WRITER

HEAVYWEIGHT: DEONTAY WILDER
LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHT: ANDRE WARD
MIDDLEWEIGHT: GENNADY GOLOVKIN
WELTERWEIGHT: KELL BROOK
LIGHTWEIGHT: VASYL LOMACHENKO
FEATHERWEIGHT: LEO SANTA CRUZ
BANTAMWEIGHT: SHINSUKE YAMANAKA
FLYWEIGHT: KAZUTO IOKA

Note: *This is how the weights break down: Heavyweight includes cruiserweight, light heavyweight includes super middleweight, all divisions middleweight through flyweight include the "junior" versions, and flyweight also includes strawweight.*

TITLE BOXING

We're into boxing, not just the boxing business.

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Pictured left to right: Damon Allen Jr., Jessie Vargas, Fernando Vargas

OFF THE CHARTS

THE RING WENT TO NINE EXPERTS TO UNDERSTAND WHAT MAKES **VASYL LOMACHENKO** SUCH A SPECIAL FIGHTER

By **Michael Rosenthal**

If Vasyl Lomachenko isn't the best fighter on the planet at this moment, that will likely come soon.

At least that seems to be the consensus of experts and fans alike, who have been dazzled by the Ukrainian's overwhelming combination of smooth, balletic movement and quick, destructive sharpshooting, which he has honed since childhood under his father/trainer, Anatoly.

Even those associated with his rivals acknowledge what many believe is obvious after only nine pro fights.

"Lomachenko, right now, to me, is the best fighter in boxing," said trainer Robert Garcia, whose gifted brother Mikey might one day go toe-to-toe with the man in question.

Lomachenko doesn't just beat you, he humiliates you, as he demonstrated in knockouts of Nicholas Walters and Jason Sosa in his last two fights. Does that remind you of anyone? Floyd Mayweather Jr. perhaps?

Most would agree that Lomachenko isn't perfect. For example, he doesn't have one-punch knockout power. The problem for his opponents is that an accumulation of punches – and he WILL land them – produce prolonged suffering and the same result. A quick knockout might be more merciful.

Of course, Lomachenko DID lose a decision to overweight, dirty-fighting veteran Orlando Salido. The fact he accepted that challenge in only his second pro fight says a lot about his confidence, though. That's another of his strengths.

Perfect? No. Special? It would appear so.

"If I had a fighter face Lomachenko, it would be hard to put together a plan to beat him," trainer Joel Diaz said. "I would just tell my fighter, 'Be a risk-taker. Just go for it.' Fight like (Marcos) Maidana did against Mayweather, like Salido did against him, and hope it works.

"Other than that, I have no idea how to beat him."

The question we want to answer here is this: What exactly makes Lomachenko so good? We asked nine boxing experts that question. Their answers helped us understand what makes this once-in-a-generation fighter so unusual.

Their perceptions of Lomachenko overlapped quite a bit. The most common theme was his footwork, which sets up everything he does and might be his greatest strength. He is always in position to drive his opponents crazy, whether that's by landing punches, avoiding punches or anything else that makes even good opponents look incompetent.

Among other characteristics we touch upon here that allow him to dominate his opponents: experience (almost 400 amateur fights and two Olympic gold medals), preparation, defense, intelligence, anticipation and a mean streak. It's a long list.

Here are the experts' thoughts.

MIKEY WILLIAMS

Vasyl Lomachenko is an ominous presence in and around the junior lightweight division.

Almost 400 amateur fights – and seven pro bouts at the time – gave Lomachenko the wherewithal to dominate Nicholas Walters.

EXPERIENCE

Tom Gray, THE RING Magazine analyst: Double Olympic gold, double world championship gold, European gold and an overall record of 396 wins and one loss. That individual medal haul and an almost unbelievable win-loss ratio in the unpaid ranks has given Lomachenko the unofficial title of "greatest amateur fighter ever." He also fought six times in the World Series of Boxing before turning professional with Top Rank. As the saying goes, practice makes perfect. And while there is no such thing as the perfect prizefighter, "Hi-Tech" was a superb pro from the moment he switched over. Yes, there was the loss to an overweight Orlando Salido, but Lomachenko has made up for that in spades. He has already defeated Gary Russell Jr., Roman Martinez and Nicholas Walters, all of whom are former or reigning world titleholders. The bouts against Martinez and Walters and, more recently, Jason Sosa became one-sided virtuoso performances. Lomachenko has captured world titles at 126 and 130 pounds and is already targeting a third divisional title at 135. His progress has been groundbreaking and that is because he has been facing the best fighters in the world, amateur and pro, for such a long time.

Bernard Hopkins, TV analyst: He's fundamentally sound and he's had so many fights that there isn't a style or situation that he hasn't faced. He's seen it all. It's why he's one of the best in the world today.

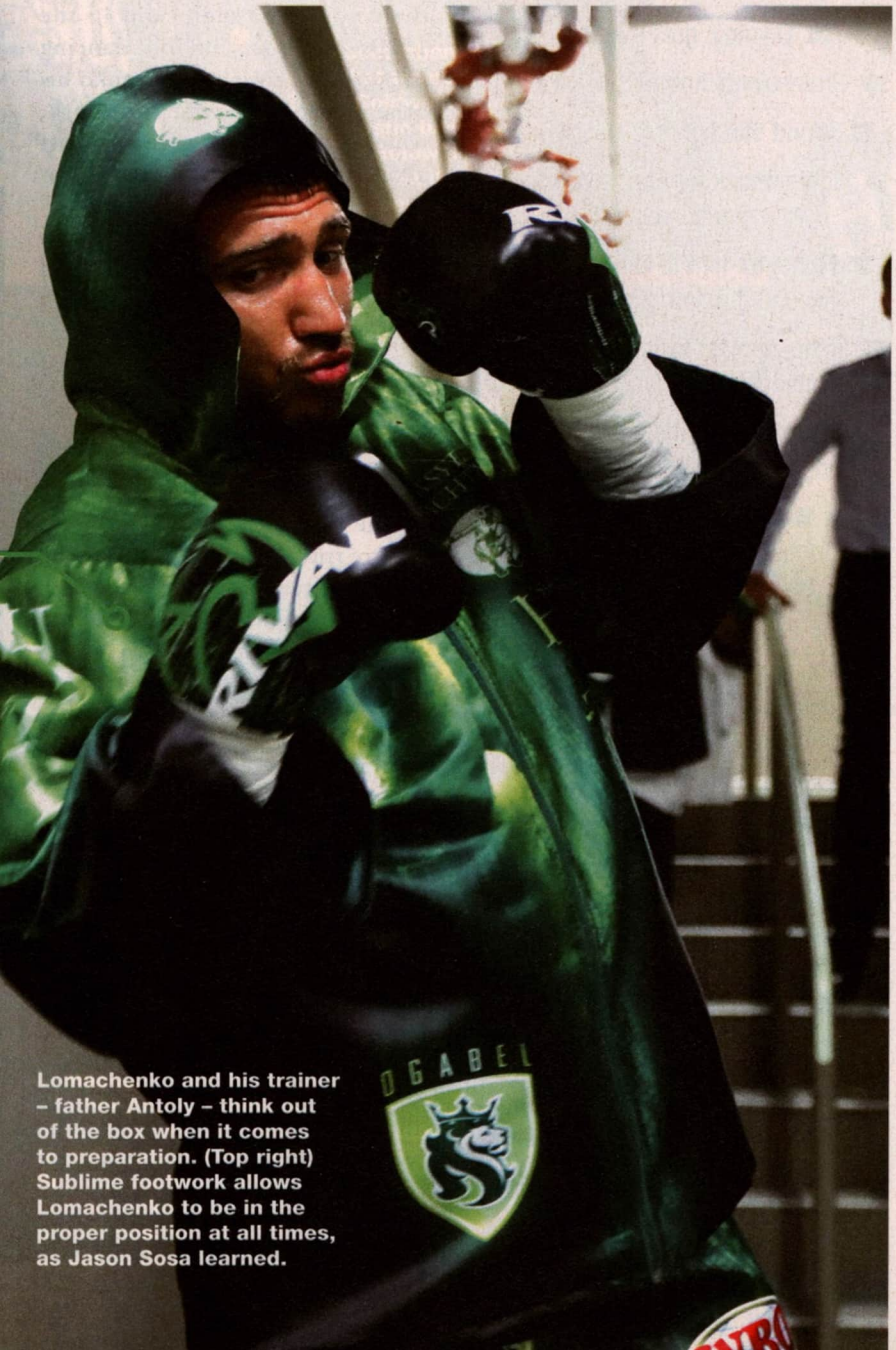
PREPARATION

Paulie Malignaggi, TV analyst: He has experience, but there are a lot of guys with experience. He has experience, he has talent, but he's also had incredible teaching. He's been schooled so well. Does that mean that anyone can go to Lomachenko's father and learn how to fight like Lomachenko? I don't think so. [Lomachenko] has been bred to do this. I heard that he did dance classes for a couple of years before he moved on to boxing. I also saw video of him on YouTube, when he was a kid, and he's an expert at (Soviet martial art) Sambo. He has so many artistic qualities and I think this was all done by design. His father always had an eye on developing him into a fighter.

(ABOVE) NAOKI FUKUDA; (RIGHT) MIKEY WILLIAMS

Robert Garcia, trainer: He grew up doing this. That's one reason he's so different; he's not one of those fighters who has learned over the past few years. Obviously he has a lot of experience but he has been doing things since he was growing up, things he and his dad do, that no one else does. I had a chance to see him train when I still had my gym in Oxnard (California) and he was training there. They had a different way of doing things. For example, he would punch (bounce with his fists) tennis balls against a wall, back and forth, and he could do it for hours. I've never seen the things they do.

David Coldwell, trainer: Top, elite-level athletes will get shown something once and that's all it takes. That's what people mean when they say an athlete is a natural. They can absorb information fast and put it out there physically. Everybody has to be taught, though. If Lomachenko wasn't coached properly then he wouldn't be who he is today.



Lomachenko and his trainer – father Antoly – think out of the box when it comes to preparation. (Top right) Sublime footwork allows Lomachenko to be in the proper position at all times, as Jason Sosa learned.

FOOTWORK

Coldwell: To defend and attack successfully, you need to have great balance and that's an underrated trait in boxing. A lot of fighters go hard and fast but there aren't too many who have perfect balance. Lomachenko is so measured and relaxed because he has that. He knows how to adjust his feet at the right time and you'll never see him take big steps or trip over himself. Whether he's spinning an opponent, changing angles, moving left to right, forward or backwards – everything is very smooth.

Malignaggi: Lomachenko's footwork is on another level. People are amazed by that, but what they miss is how he goes about achieving angles. He's stepping around all the time and he does that with a combination of footwork and punch output. A lot of time, he's using his punch output to step around. He'll take the power off some of the shots but throw them at speed so that he puts you out of position. The opponent reacts to that speed, loses position and Lomachenko has put himself into a new position. Then he'll start to sting you. He does that

consistently and he does it with a lot of variation. Sometimes he'll throw a combination that means something, sometimes he'll throw a combination that means nothing, but then he'll be changing the angle. I call these lighter shots decoys. It's hard to keep up with him because he's changing things up so often. Sometimes he'll even change mid-combination.

Ronnie Shields, trainer: The way he moves side to side would be confusing for anybody. He comes at you from all over the place. He gives so many angles that it's hard to figure out where he is at a given time. And he throws so many punches, punches from everywhere. What do you do?

Hopkins: I like the way Lomachenko moves his legs. Hall of Famers Aaron Pryor and Naseem Hamed, [Lomachenko] beats people with his legs like they did. How can you hit someone who's never in front of you? He had Jason Sosa spinning in circles. Lomachenko gets into position where he bewilders these guys. ... If I can get you in a position where your back is turned, you have no idea where I am. I haven't seen a fighter since Prince Naseem where he can beat a guy with positioning like that.

Doug Fischer, editor of RingTV.com and TV analyst: What separates Lomachenko from other elite boxers in my mind is his magnificent footwork. He dazzles opponents and fans with his speed, accuracy and creative combinations but really controls his fights with his footwork: the in-and-out movement, the side-steps and the angles when in close. It was his footwork that enabled him to basically "handcuff" an exceptional boxing talent in Gary Russell Jr. for 12 rounds. Lomachenko's father and trainer, Anatoly, understood the importance of footwork in boxing (and in all sports) and made sure his son had a proper foundation with balance and coordination before they embarked on their historic amateur career. Anatoly enrolled Vasyl in traditional Ukrainian folk dancing programs that eventually led to the lad being on various national youth troops and companies. The old man wasn't crazy for doing this. Some of the greatest boxers of all time, such as Mickey Walker and Sugar Ray Robinson, were excellent tap dancers and had learned to tap floors before they hit bags in their youth, as many did in the 1920s and '30s. The folk dancing background gives Lomachenko his otherworldly boxing footwork, which gives him his edge over just about anyone he faces in the ring.

LOMACHENKO BY THE NUMBERS

397	Amateur fights (396-1)
2	Times he avenged his only amateur loss
2	Olympic gold medals
9	Professional fights (8-1, 6 KOs)
8	World title fights (7-1, 5 KOs)
3	Fights it took for him to win first title (equals record)
7	Fights for him to win a title in second division (a record)
5	Fights against former or current titleholders (4-1, 3 KOs)
35	Combined title fights of his opponents (16-15-4, 10 KOs)
50.8	Power-punch connect percentage (second to Adonis Stevenson's 54.5 among active fighters)
23.1	Opponents' power-punch connect percentage (second to Guillermo Rigondeaux's 19.9)
+20.7	Lomachenko's plus/minus rating (the difference between his overall connect percentage and that of his opponents)
1	Plus/minus rank among active fighters (highest since Floyd Mayweather Jr.'s +24.5)
16.8	Opponents' overall connect percentage (shares top spot with Rigondeaux)

Source: CompuBox provided the punch statistics

Abel Sanchez, trainer: He is always in position to throw and land the next punch; he's never out of position. He throws punches because he wants to, not out of desperation. It's calculated. He's there to be able to throw.

Hopkins: He uses angles, and by the time any of his opponents try to find him, they're getting hit five times upside their head. Lomachenko makes guys think too much. He has so many weapons, between his positioning, his movement, the angles he punches on – these fighters can't handle it. It's why it takes a special fighter to beat him.

DEFENSE

Gray: Lomachenko is so hard to find because his defense is every bit as elaborate and sophisticated as his offense. He bends at the knees to change the level of target and rolls under shots by bending briskly at the waist. The impressive thing is that Lomachenko can implement this bob-and-weave style while moving laterally, or he

(Top) Lomachenko has what trainer David Coldwell called "a fantastic boxing brain." (Below) His defensive skills leave his opponents punching the air.

can do it with his feet planted while looking to counterpunch. These defensive smarts are also aided by his amazing agility and footspeed. Lomachenko's ability to slip shots and step around the target to locate angles is a gift. His opponents miss wildly, become reticent to throw, and then they get picked off. The flow of Lomachenko's defense is always changing, so there's no fixed pattern to exploit. When you have defensive skills of that caliber and mix in split-second reflexes and amazing hand-eye coordination, you can only marvel at what Lomachenko does as an escape artist. Throwing shots directly at the target is futile and it will take one very special fighter to time him. Lomachenko has looked almost untouchable since that blip against Orlando Salido three years ago.

INTELLIGENCE

Coldwell: He has a fantastic boxing brain. You could say that any man with that amount of fights should have a good boxing brain, but that isn't always the case. A lot of fighters just follow instructions from their coach, but then a certain situation could arise where the plan isn't working and a fighter will start struggling. That lack of intelligence inside the ring will show up if a coach doesn't have a Plan B or can't adapt. With Lomachenko, whatever the opponent tries, he has the answer for it. He knows when to go, where to go and when to be patient. And because he's so clever, he can read an opponent's attacks better.

Malignaggi: They used to say Henry Armstrong had perpetual motion. When you're on the outside looking in, Lomachenko is making you think, "Oh my God, this guy is throwing too many punches. How does he have the oxygen to do that?" The thing is, he knows when to take the

sting off some of the punches. He knows when to put something on the punches. His intelligence at these moments, because some of these moments are key decision-making moments, is crucial. He's required to make decisions so quickly and, at the last moment, he might change the direction of a punch or a combination. His instinct for doing this, combined with terrific intelligence, dictates the decisions he makes.

Sanchez: I've always said that intelligence in the ring isn't just good skills. Intelligent fighters fight like a chess match, thinking about what they're going to do three, four moves ahead of time. Andre Ward is like that. Mayweather is like that. I think Lomachenko is one of those guys too.

ANTICIPATION

Coldwell: He has incredible anticipation. It's all about reading a fight and reading the opponent. Lomachenko is a master at that. He knows what shot to throw and when. Then it's like he's planning an exit strategy after each attack. He always knows where he's going to go and the opponent doesn't. That always gives him a split-second advantage.

MEAN STREAK

Malignaggi: Lomachenko has a mean streak in him and that's important when you're a fighter. I don't mind that at all. You have to psychologically and physically break your opponent down. You have to let your opponent know that you're superior to them in every way. When you're in there, you have to do whatever it takes to win.

Joel Diaz, trainer: He'll tear you up. He'll pick you apart slowly, round by round. He will find your weaknesses. And if he hurts you,

(Top) Lomachenko is always a step or two ahead of his opponents. (Below) He doesn't hesitate to deliver pain.

The fact Lomachenko fought for a world title in his second fight is evidence of his confidence.

he'll definitely find a way to finish you. Killer instinct.

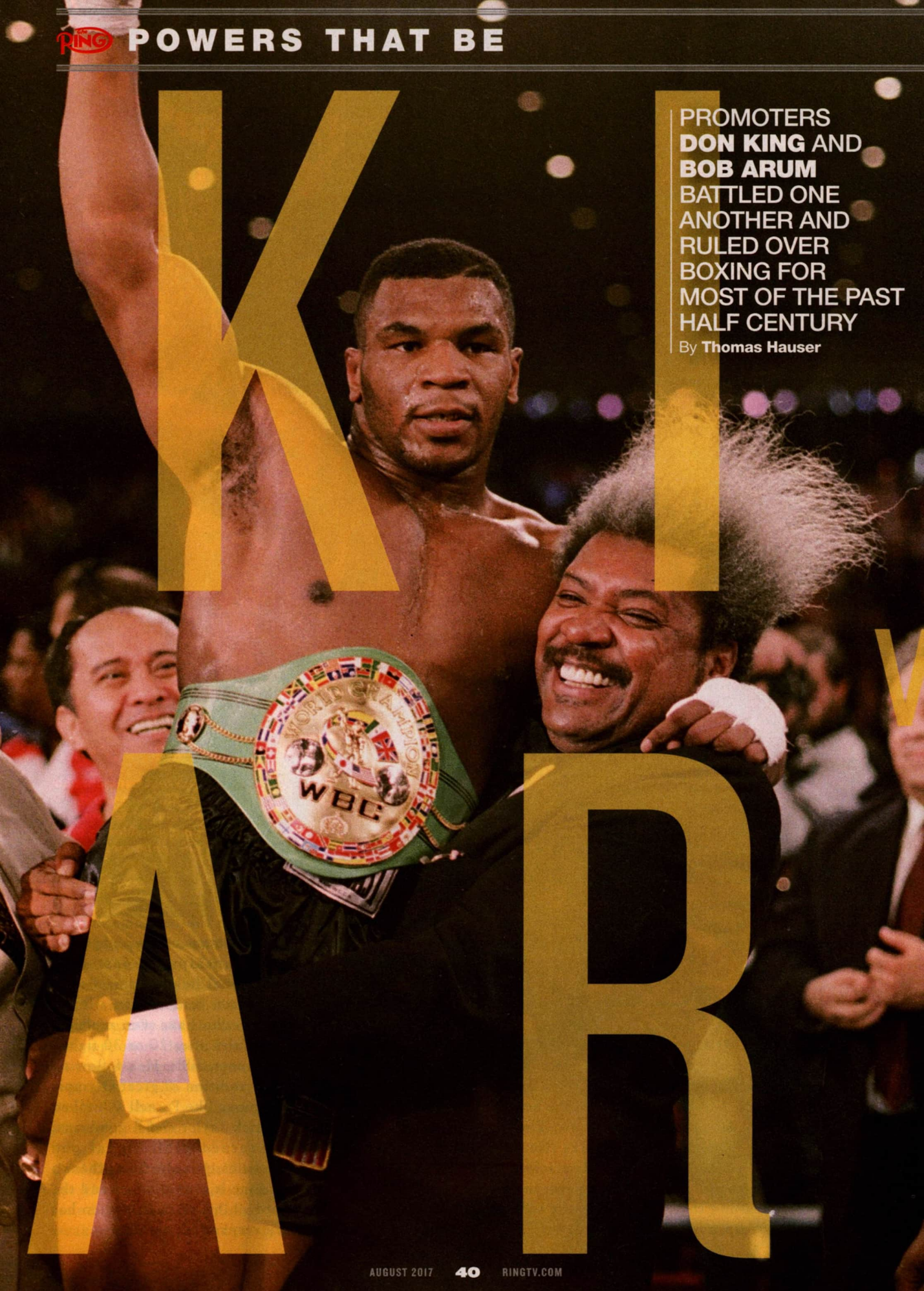
CONFIDENCE

Joe Gallagher, trainer: A lot of credit must be given to Lomachenko's training team and his promoter, Bob Arum. Normally, if an Olympic gold medalist wanted a world title shot in their first or second fight, they would be told that they don't know the business and that they have to be built up over time. That's how much confidence Lomachenko's team have in him. They were willing to roll the dice and do something different. OK, he lost a controversial split decision to Orlando Salido in his second fight, but he came right back and beat Gary Russell Jr. in his third fight. And Russell is one of the best fighters out there right now. These top-class amateurs, like (Guillermo) Rigondeaux and Lomachenko, don't want to fight journeymen on the way up. They want to test themselves against the very best. They're accustomed to fighting the best amateurs in Olympic tournaments and World Championships. In just nine professional fights, Lomachenko has a better resume than a lot of fighters who have won multiple world titles after 20 or 30 fights. That is incredible. He's following a fine tradition of great Olympic champions like Pernell Whitaker, Meldrick Taylor and Rigondeaux, who turned professional and won titles quickly. Lomachenko has done it even quicker and the approach his team has taken has been very refreshing. RING

KING V ARUM

PROMOTERS **DON KING** AND **BOB ARUM** BATTLED ONE ANOTHER AND RULED OVER BOXING FOR MOST OF THE PAST HALF CENTURY

By **Thomas Hauser**



This is part of a two-article package exploring the impact of promoters Don King and Bob Arum, as well as their link to another power broker – President Donald Trump, who had a foray into boxing in the 1990s. The Trump article begins on Page 50.

KING'S RUM

Don King (previous page) and Bob Arum (above) have always been associated with the biggest stars in the sport.

KING: DOUGLAS C. PIZAC/AP; ARUM: JAE C. HONG/AP

Don King will be 86 years old on August 20 of this year. Bob Arum is four months younger.

Arum is still a force in boxing, although the calendar suggests that he's nearing the end of a long, impressive run.

For King, the clock struck midnight in the first decade of the new millennium insofar as the promotion of big fights is concerned. After years of glory, his carriage has turned into a pumpkin.

King and Arum have dominated boxing for much of the past 50 years and shaped the business as we know it today. There hasn't been a time since the mid-1960s when one or both of them wasn't significantly influencing the sport. They've thrived in the jungle that is boxing and been its most important promoters since Tex Rickard died 88 years ago.

Rickard was boxing's first modern promoter and, arguably, the greatest boxing promoter who ever lived. More than anyone else, he was responsible for creating The Golden Age of Boxing. His promotions included Jack Johnson vs. James Jeffries, Joe Gans vs. Battling Nelson, Jack Dempsey vs. Jess Willard and Dempsey's later fights against Georges Carpentier, Luis Firpo and Gene Tunney.

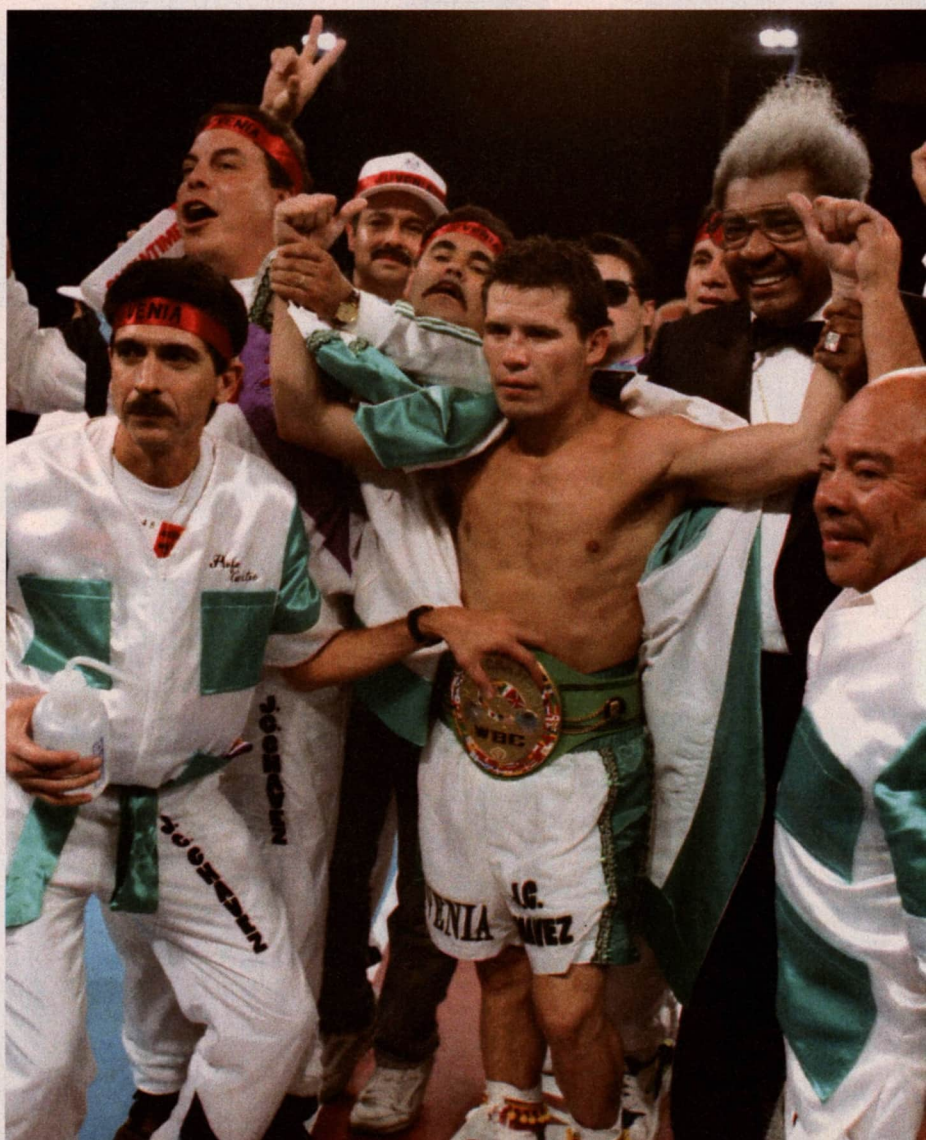
Rickard gave the public what it wanted and promoted in every sense of the word. He didn't get site fees from casinos and license fees from television networks. His revenue came primarily from the sale of tickets. At times, he built his own arena (in Reno, Nevada, for Johnson-Jeffries; in Toledo, Ohio, for Willard-Dempsey; and in Jersey City, New Jersey, for Dempsey-Carpentier). He set the standard by which future boxing promoters would be judged.

Two years after Rickard died, Bob Arum was born in the Crown Heights section of Brooklyn. The son of an Orthodox Jewish accountant, Arum graduated from New York University in 1953 and Harvard Law School in 1956. Six years later, he was working as an attorney in the tax division of the United States Attorney's Office in Manhattan when Floyd Patterson defended his heavyweight title against Sonny Liston. Arum was given the assignment of impounding revenue from the fight's closed-circuit television outlets. He had never seen a fight before. But he could count and the numbers impressed him.

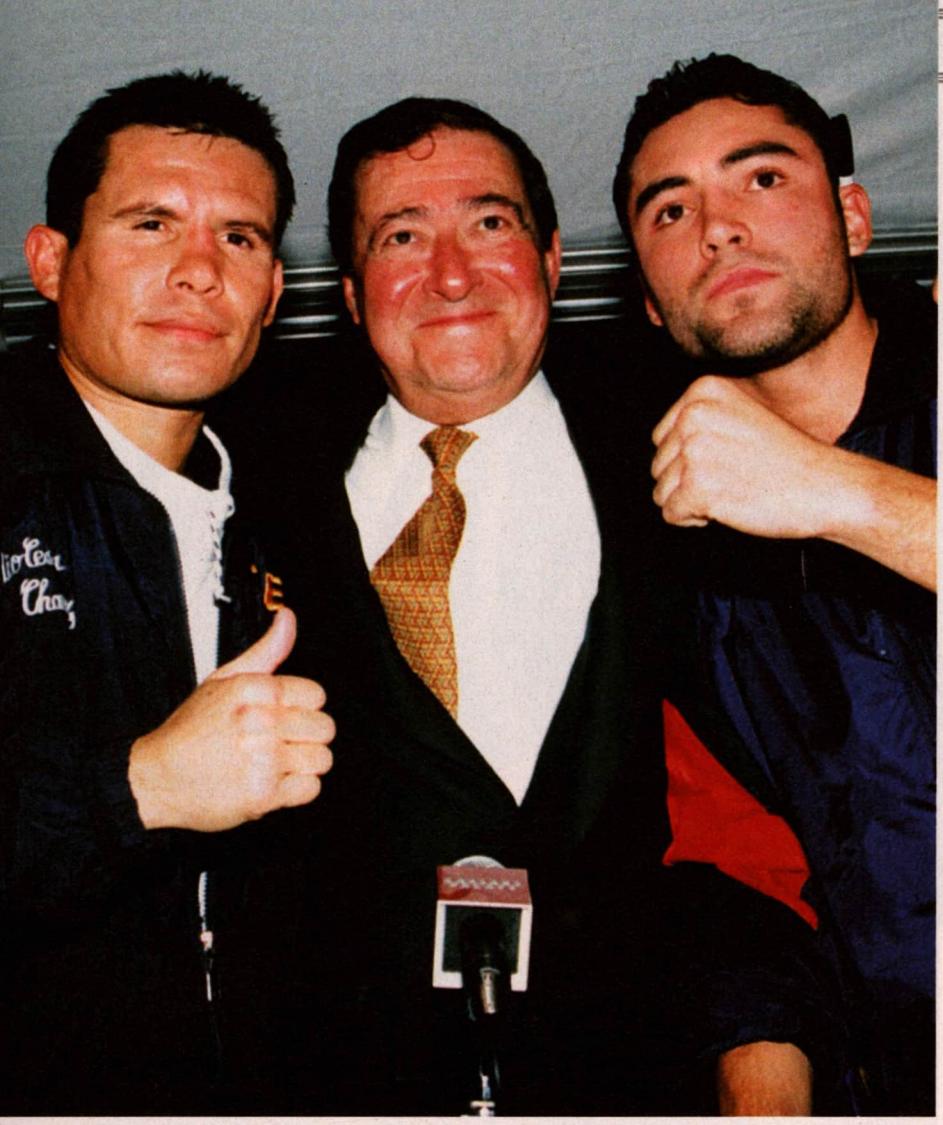
Arum left government service in 1965 and was introduced to Muhammad Ali by football great Jim Brown. In 1966, he formed a company called Main Bouts to promote Ali's fights. The other equity participants in Main Bouts were Herbert Muhammad (Ali's manager), John Ali (chief aide to Nation of Islam leader Elijah Muhammad), Lester Malitz (an expert in the area of closed-circuit telecasts) and Brown. Their first promotion was Ali vs. George Chuvalo on March 29, 1966, in Toronto.

After Ali was stripped of his title for refusing induction into the United States Army, Arum set up a second corporation called Sports Action and promoted an elimination tournament to crown a new heavyweight champion. Top Rank (his current promotional company) was incorporated in the early 1970s.

As of April 1, 2017, Arum had



King turned his attention to Mexican star Julio Cesar Chavez when Mike Tyson went to prison.



Arum's superstar Oscar De La Hoya (right) faced Chavez in 1996 and 1998.

promoted more than 2,000 fight cards. These cards were contested in 215 American cities located in 42 different states and in 92 foreign cities located in 26 countries. Breaking these numbers down further, Arum, as of April 1, had promoted 596 world title fights, 127 shows on HBO, 30 on Showtime, 48 pay-per-view cards and 27 closed-circuit telecasts.

These are staggering numbers.

Don King came out of a very different environment from Arum. He was born in the underside of Cleveland. When King was 9, his father was killed in an industrial accident. Don, his sister and four brothers were raised by their mother.

Over time, King became one of the largest illegal numbers racketeers in Cleveland. He fatally shot one man and beat another to death. The first killing was ruled justifiable homicide as a matter of self-defense. The second landed King in prison after a jury convicted him of murder, a finding later reduced to manslaughter.

Released from prison in 1971, King made his way into boxing and soon realized that the sweet science was an environment in which people made their own laws. He began as a manager and moved quickly to promoting. In 1974, he was brought into the George Foreman vs. Ken Norton championship bout by Video Techniques, the closed-circuit firm promoting the fight.

"I was their token n-----," King later recalled. "A black face to deal with the blacks."

Thereafter, working with Video Techniques and The Hemdale Corporation, King journeyed to Zaire and persuaded President Mobutu Sese Seko to part with $10 million of his nation's scarce foreign currency to cover the fighters' purses for Muhammad Ali vs. George Foreman, "The Rumble in the Jungle."

Ultimately, King gained control over the heavyweight division as no one else ever has. At one point during Larry Holmes' championship reign, King had promotional ties to Holmes and 11 of the top 12 ranked World Boxing Council challengers. Later, King had promotional control over Mike Tyson, which he leveraged to extend his power.

There was a time when King could lay claim to having promoted seven of the 10 largest pay-per-view fights in history (as gauged by total buys) and 12 of the top 20 highest-grossing live boxing gates in the history of Nevada. He has promoted Ali, Tyson, Foreman, Holmes, Joe Frazier, Evander Holyfield, Ray Leonard, Roberto Duran, Julio Cesar Chavez, Felix Trinidad, Roy Jones and dozens of other Hall of Fame fighters.

It's easy to praise King and Arum, and easy to criticize them. They're similar in some ways and radically different in others.

"King forgives but he doesn't forget," veteran sportswriter Jerry Izenberg says. "Arum does neither. A lot more people respect them than like them."

Both men are too complex for simple caricature. They're brilliant and demanding, focused and driven, indefatigable and imaginative, admired in some circles and disliked in others. They're not ordinary people. Each man enjoys the process and is a survivor.

Ethical standards aren't known for being high among boxing promoters or within the industry as a whole. Decades ago, Jimmy Cannon labeled boxing "the red light district of professional sports." The sweet science had reputation issues long before King and Arum got involved. As John Schulian noted, "Charles Darwin

RING MAGAZINE

would have loved the fight racket." The Marquess of Queensberry Rules apply only to what goes on inside the ring.

Reflecting on the respective careers of King and Arum, Izenberg recently opined, "Neither one has a moral edge over the other where boxing is concerned. It's like a discussion about the Bible. It depends on which side you're on and which sin you're talking about."

Both men have had questionable relationships with sanctioning body officials and state athletic commission officials over the years.

Each can tell a lie now and then. King boldly proclaimed, "The boxing business is predicated on lies." Arum will be followed to the grave by his utterance, "Yesterday I was lying. Today I'm telling the truth."

Arum made an accommodation with the government in South Africa and sent fighters to Sun City during the boycott to protest apartheid. King responded by calling Arum "The Master of Apartheid" (as well as the "Prince of Eviality" and "Wizard of Trickeration").

Then King sent one of his own fighters (Greg Page) to fight in South Africa. That led Arthur Ashe and Harry Belafonte to begin the process of removing King from the executive committee of Artists and Athletes Against Apartheid. King resigned from the organization before the removal could be implemented.

Ferdie Pacheco once advised, "Think of Don King as a sledgehammer and Bob Arum as a stiletto."

"One's black and one's white," British promoter Mickey Duff offered. "That's the only difference."

But there are significant differences other than race, starting with King's persona.

King has the physical presence and vitality of a man far younger than his 85 years. His large, bulky frame (he stands 6 feet 2 inches tall and has weighed as much as 280 pounds), trademark hair, ostentatious bling,

THE ALI FACTOR

Muhammad Ali was a King (and Arum) maker.

MUHAMMAD ALI WAS PIVOTAL IN THE CAREERS OF KING AND ARUM

By Thomas Hauser

One of the many similarities between Don King and Bob Arum is that the cornerstone of power for each of them was Muhammad Ali.

"It was bizarre, really," Arum said, reflecting back on the origins of his promotional relationship with Ali. "One of the things you have to understand is, in the beginning, I knew nothing about boxing. And even after I learned the business, for a long time I still knew nothing about the sport. And here were these guys, Herbert Muhammad and John Ali, from an organization that was considered very militant, very racist. There I was, a white Jewish lawyer. But we made the marriage."

However, the marriage fell apart temporarily when Ali refused induction into the United States Army.

"I wish I could say that I stood squarely with Ali on Vietnam, but I didn't." Arum acknowledged. "I thought what he was doing was horrible. You have to understand where I was coming from. I thought the war was good, and if not good, it was America. I considered myself a patriot, and like a lot of people, I was appalled by the position Ali took. I tried to help him. I even spoke to [Democratic fundraiser] Arthur Krim about making a deal with Lyndon Johnson that would allow Ali to go into the Army and not wear a uniform. He would have been able to continue fighting professionally. It was a real face-saving deal, but Ali turned it down, and I thought he was crazy."

Don King met Ali in the mid-1960s before Ali refused induction into the Army. The man who introduced them was Lloyd Price, who wrote and recorded the rock 'n' roll hits "Personality" and "Stagger Lee."

"Don was strictly a Cleveland man at the time," Price later recalled. "He didn't know anything about New York or Chicago or Los Angeles, and he was into numbers, not boxing. But that was the introduction. He and Ali got together – once, I think it was. Then Don went to prison. But when he got out, you could see the wheels turning in his mind."

King prevailed on Price to ask Ali to box a charity exhibition for the Forest City Hospital in Cleveland. Ali did it for free, and Don Elbaum helped King with the promotion. Next, King promoted several small fight cards on his own in Ohio. After that, Video Techniques hired him as a consultant.

On March 8, 1971, King had listened to reports of the first Ali-Joe Frazier fight from his prison cell in Marion, Ohio. Three years later, he was a key player in putting together Ali-Foreman. And one year after that, he promoted the historic third Ali-Frazier confrontation in Manila.

King and Arum (right) sometimes met under contentious circumstances in court.

booming voice and high-pitched laugh suggest a force of nature. He's loud, flamboyant, sometimes vulgar, and has a smile that brightens a room more effectively than theatrical lighting.

Unlike Arum, who stays largely in the background, King thrives on attention. His carnival barker's style has made it appear at times as though he's the ringmaster for all of boxing. He takes joy, not just satisfaction, in promoting. His ego is on display for the whole world to see. He's a brand unto himself and his own monument. His greatest accomplishment is the creation of Don King.

No one who meets Don King forgets him. With the exception of Muhammad Ali, no one in boxing has had more charisma.

All Arum has to sell is the fights he promotes. For decades, King has sold the fights and himself. His presence adds a buzz and entertainment value to a promotion. Even today, casual fans assume that if King is involved, a fight is big.

"Don King is the only person in the world who can promote a fight by force of personality," promoter Lou DiBella said.

King became larger than boxing. Over the years, he met with Nelson Mandela, Mikhail Gorbachev, Leonid Brezhnev, Vladimir Putin, Pope John Paul II, Pope Benedict XVI, Tony Blair, Fidel Castro, Ferdinand Marcos and eight presidents of the United States. Also, as he recites, "most of the people who have been president of a country in Africa, some Chinese heads of state, every president of Mexico for 30 years, that woman who's chancellor of Germany, and more senators, governors and mayors than you can count."

Even today, long removed from his glory years, King is one of the most recognizable people in the world. His face is more familiar than that of any active fighter. He has stamped his persona on boxing more visibly than all but a handful of legendary champions.

Arum could walk down any street unnoticed. Wherever King goes, he's encapsulated in a bubble of public attention. Everyone from high-ranking corporate executives to day laborers stop and stare. People in boxing are asked all the time, "Do you know Don King?" One is rarely asked, "Do you know Bob Arum?"

Any discussion of King's accomplishments has to include the issue of race. America dealt King the race card, and he played it brilliantly. "I'm a black man from the ghetto, an ex-convict," he proudly proclaimed. "I came out of the penitentiary to rewrite history."

When King got into boxing, black men weren't sports entrepreneurs. For the most part, they still aren't. King gave African-Americans a feeling of empowerment. For many, he was an inspiration. He walked into rooms filled with white guys from Harvard Business School who thought they were smarter than he was and forced them to treat him as an equal. Eventually, many of them were forced to concede that King played the game better than they did.

Race was a potent weapon in King's battle to sign black fighters. His appeal to them was personal: "I love you. I love your momma. I come from the same place that you come from."

Richie Giachetti, who trained Larry Holmes and worked extensively with King, observed, "The man's greatest asset is that he was born black, because the fighters are black. He knows them. He knows how to rile them, how to sweet-talk them. He'll say and do whatever it takes to win them over."

"Don doesn't get fighters to sign with him just by offering them a lot of money," legendary trainer Emanuel Steward added. "He signs them by getting inside their heads."

It's not easy to put big fights

ALI: RING MAGAZINE; KING: MICHAEL FRANCIS MCELROY/AP

together. Anyone who questions that assertion should ask how many truly big fights Al Haymon has put together on behalf of Premier Boxing Champions with hundreds of millions of dollars in his war chest. The answer is, none.

King made big fights that the public wanted to see. He was the driving force behind "The Rumble in the Jungle" and "The Thrilla in Manila." Historic co-promotions like Larry Holmes vs. Gerry Cooney and Felix Trinidad vs. Oscar De La Hoya bore his imprint. His showmanship put 132,247 fans in seats for Julio Cesar Chavez vs. Greg Haugen in Azteca Stadium in Mexico City.

At times, King promoted pay-per-view extravaganzas with four legitimate world championship fights on the card. He took an unknown female fighter – Christy Martin – and got her on the cover of Sports Illustrated.

Seth Abraham, former president of Time Warner Sports and the architect of HBO's boxing program, says, "There were times when Don's promotions seemed like they were from another planet. Bob's promotions were carried out on a very high level but they tended to be conventional. If you took a Don King fight and gave it to Arum, Bob might increase the gross a bit. If you took a Bob Arum fight and gave it to King, it became a more important cultural event. Don was incredibly creative in making his fights bigger than just a boxing match and infusing them with sociological importance. Look at how he turned Ali-Foreman into one of the major cultural events of the 1970s by taking the fight to Zaire."

But King also added to the negativity in boxing. He came from the school of "whatever it takes" and played by the rules of the street. Everyone he dealt with was a target to be hustled. "Looking for fair play from Don King," British sportswriter Hugh McIlvanney wrote, "is like asking a wolverine to use a napkin."

King could talk faster and shout louder than anyone else. He had ready cash and used it to his advantage. The image of King luring heavyweight champion Hasim Rahman away from promoter Cedric Kushner with a duffel bag filled with $400,000 in cash endures to this day.

Long ago, Lou DiBella declared, "I wouldn't flip a two-headed coin with Don King if I had heads."

King's alliance with WBC president Jose Sulaiman was toxic for boxing. It raised the corruption of boxing's world sanctioning organizations to a new level. And there were other misdeeds, such as the promotion in the late1970s of tournaments on ABC replete with rigged ratings that smeared the entire sport and tarnished

Arum helped build the foundation on which Floyd Mayweather Jr. made a fortune.

THE RING (which was complicit in the phony ratings) in the process.

Ultimately, King's image was irreparably damaged by the near-universal recognition that he was financially exploiting the fighters he promoted.

Like most businesspeople, boxing promoters profit by taking in as much money as possible and paying out as little money as possible. A boxing promoter does not have a fiduciary duty to the fighter.

That said, King raised the exploitation of fighters to a new level. As former HBO boxing analyst Larry Merchant notes, "Neither King nor Arum qualifies as a choirboy.

Each one probably did as many bad things as the other insofar as boxing is concerned. But when Arum signed a contract with a fighter, the fighter got what he signed for. The number might not have been fair, but at least the fighter got it. And when King signed a contract with a fighter, that was just the starting point for a new round of negotiations. Unless a contract ran in King's favor, a contract was just a piece of paper with some writing on it."

"Don King has made a lot of fighters rich," Larry Holmes (a cornerstone of King's power) said. "And Don King has made a lot of fighters poor."

Arum, like King, made many big fights happen at the right time. He has thrived by being ahead of the curve when it comes to the business of boxing. Like a good fighter, he has made adjustments as time went by.

Abraham worked with Arum for years and says, "There's no question in my mind that Bob is the most advanced thinker ever in the marriage of television and boxing. Don operated largely in the present. Bob was always thinking down the road."

Arum says that his essential strength as a promoter is his ability as an administrator. His companies have always had a strong infrastructure. He surrounds himself with competent people, likes organization and wants his office to operate like clockwork.

By contrast, much of what happened around King was unplanned. Ten years ago, Alan Hopper, then King's director of public relations, acknowledged, "Working for Don is crazy. He keeps no schedule. Everything is subject to change. He does what he wants to do when he wants to do it. He might call up and say, 'We're having a press conference in China in two days,' and he expects you to get it done. I never know what will happen when I go to work in the morning."

Building a boxing superstar is a long, arduous task. Nobody has done it better than Arum. King tended to excel with already-made fighters. His modus operandi was, "You build the fighter, and then I'll take him away from you." Arum builds fighters from scratch pursuant to long-term plans that look years into the future.

Oscar De La Hoya was Arum's promotional masterpiece. Arum promoted De La Hoya's first 37 fights. Arum also built the careers of Miguel Cotto (41 fights), Floyd Mayweather Jr. (35 fights), Marvin Hagler (20 fights, late in Hagler's journey) and many others worthy of note. Manny Pacquiao was a star when he signed with Top Rank, but Arum lifted him higher.

Arum didn't invent any new technologies (e.g. closed circuit, pay-per-view, the internet, social media). But he has used them well.

When ESPN was launched in 1979, it was far from the colossus that it is today. Lumberjacking and replays of Australian-rules football were common fare. "Top Rank Boxing on ESPN" debuted on April 10, 1980, and continued for 15 years. The series guaranteed regularly scheduled programming 52 weeks a year and enabled boxing to hold onto a fan base that had been dwindling since the demise of "Gillette Friday Night Fights."

Arum's deal with ESPN established basic cable as a significant new outlet for boxing programming. In 1981 he moved a step further, contracting for Marvin Hagler to appear three times on HBO. It was the first multi-fight

King presided over the regrettable Larry Holmes (left) vs. Ali fight.

contract ever for an elite fighter to appear on a premium cable television network.

Arum also championed boxing's lighter weight classes. In part, that was out of necessity. By the early 1980s, the number of good heavyweights was dwindling and King had a stranglehold on the division.

One can argue that it was a no-brainer to build lucrative championship fights around Ray Leonard, Marvin Hagler, Roberto Duran and Thomas Hearns. Ditto for Aaron Pryor and Alexis Arguello. But Arum took 108-pound Michael Carbajal out of the 1988 Olympics and promoted him to a million-dollar purse in a matchup against Humberto "Chiquita" Gonzalez. Boxing's two biggest stars in recent years – Mayweather and Pacquiao – have been "small" fighters.

Also, before and more than any other major promoter, Arum understood the wisdom in targeting the Hispanic market.

Not all of Arum's ventures reflected well on the sweet science. Muhammad Ali vs. professional wrestler Antonio Inoki comes quickly to mind. But it was Arum who sold the world on the possibilities inherent in a comeback by a washed-up, overweight, hamburger-eating heavyweight who hadn't fought in 10 years.

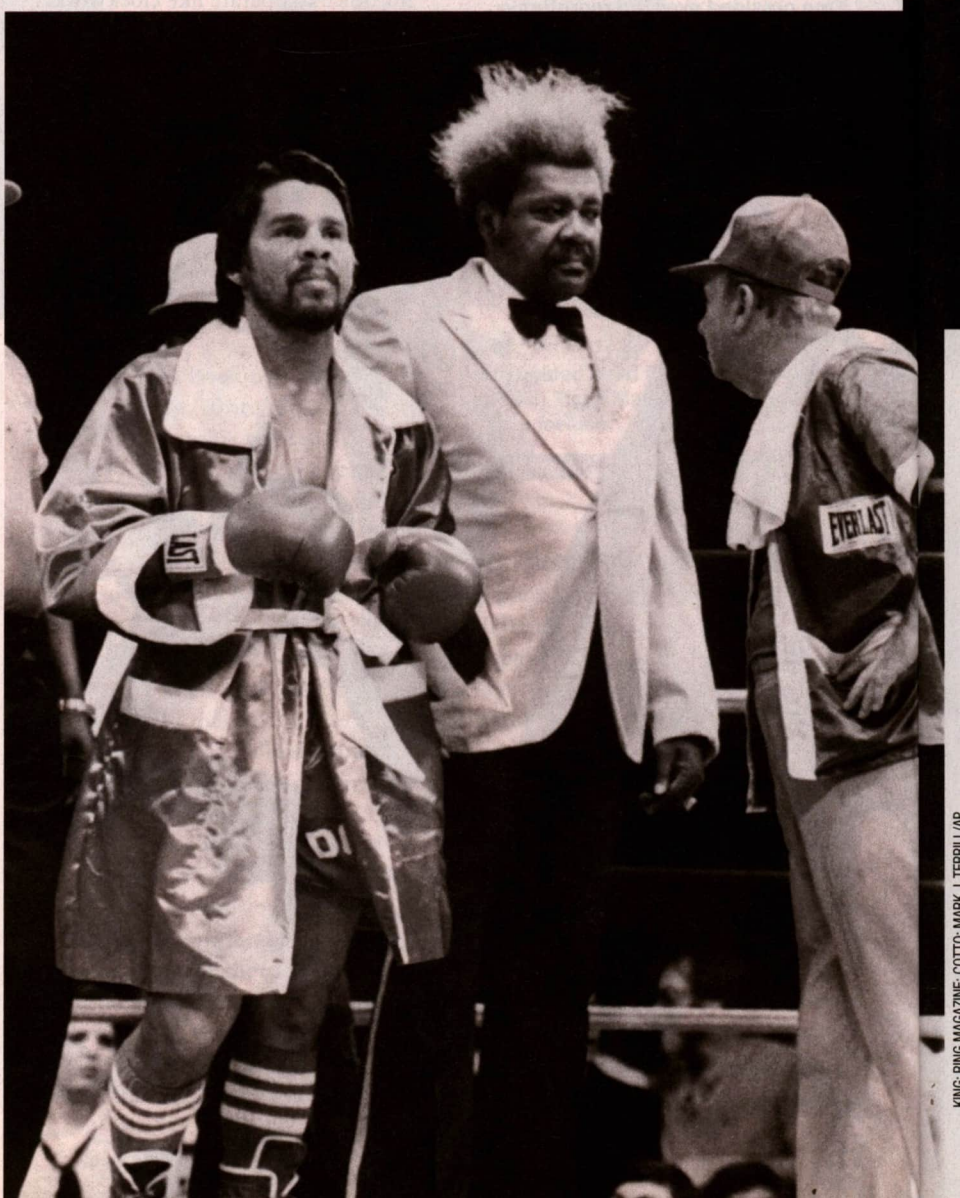
When George Foreman returned to the ring in 1987, his comeback was mocked as a quixotic quest. Big George's early opponents (Steve Zouski, Charles Hostetter, Bobby Crabtree, Tim Anderson, Rocky Sekorski, Tom Trimm and Guido Trane) did little to dispel that notion. But in 1994, Foreman knocked out Michael Moorer to reclaim the heavyweight championship of the world.

Arum is still a force in boxing. His current roster of fighters is headed by Terence Crawford, Vasyl Lomachenko and Pacquiao, who still has some earning power left in him. Top Rank enjoys a worldwide reach, although, if Mayweather-Pacquiao were removed from the balance sheet, there might be some red ink.

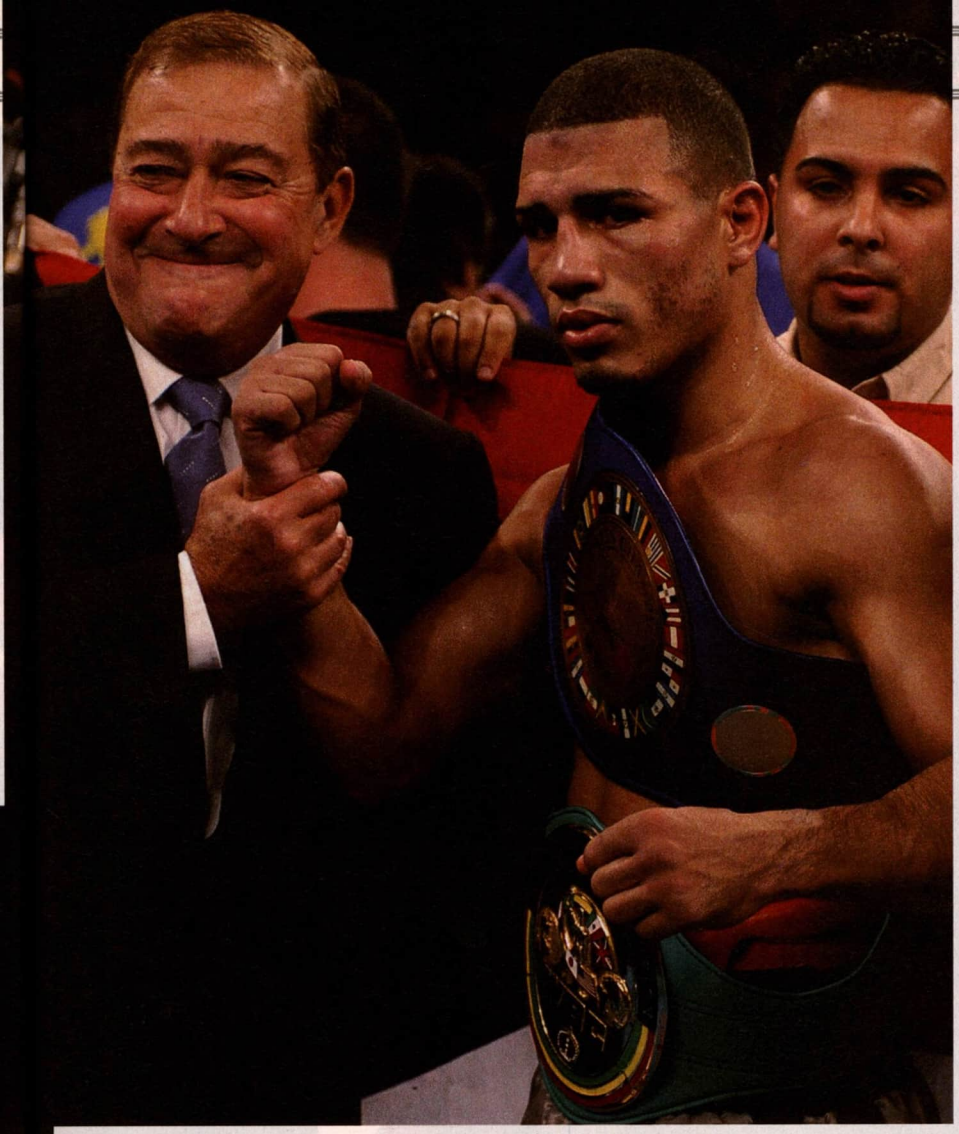
King has been humbled in recent years. Control of the heavyweight championship in the person of Ali, Holmes, Tyson and their brethren was his most valuable asset. He played that leverage to the hilt. But after King took Tyson to Showtime in the mid-1990s, HBO made a decision to license fewer fights from him. Then King lost Tyson, and Showtime also moved away from him.

King managed to thrive for a while with lighter-weight fighters like Felix Trinidad and Julio Cesar Chavez. But the power dynamic was shifting against him. Network executives found other promoters easier to deal with. What had worked in the past no longer worked as well as it had before. King had enough money and enough trappings from the glory years that he chose to not adapt. The times changed. Unlike Arum, King didn't change with them. His stable of fighters today consists of a few fringe contenders.

"That makes me sad," says Don Elbaum, who began teaching King the nuances of promoting more than four decades ago. "Don was the Ringling Brothers, Barnum & Bailey of boxing. They just closed down the circus, and Don is closing down too. I'll miss them both."



King helped build Panamanian Roberto Duran into a star in the U.S.



Miguel Cotto was one of several Latino stars with whom Arum worked.

Most professional sports are structured so, in many respects, a win for one is a win for all. Tiger Woods' dominance in golf meant higher TV license fees and greater income streams that benefited his competitors on the PGA tour. Tom Brady and LeBron James generate a lot of money for themselves and more for their respective leagues' coffers. A rising tide lifts all boats.

Not so in boxing. There's virtually no cooperation among rivals, no sense that anyone is part of a larger whole. Each promoter is an island unto himself, as are most fighters.

Within that framework, what will the legacies of King and Arum be?

"Tex Rickard left boxing better off than when he found it," historian Mike Silver answers. "You can't say that about King and Arum. They exploited boxing and, particularly in King's case, brought boxing down to their level. They helped drive the process that has led to boxing having more than one hundred so-called world champions at any given point in time."

A gentler view might be that greatness in a promoter is measured by four criteria:

1. Did the promoter promote big fights that the public wanted to see? For decades, King and Arum did.

2. Did the promoter match fighters in a way that helped them grow as ring craftsmen and build the fighters as commercial attractions? Here, Arum has the upper hand, but King was no slouch.

3. Longevity ... Arum was important in the 1960s and remains a force in boxing today. King was a dominant player for more than 30 years.

4. Did the promoter take boxing to a new level? For both King and Arum, for better and for worse, the answer is "yes."

Arum, more than anyone else, brought the business of boxing into today's era. King had an enormous impact in shaping the public perception of boxing.

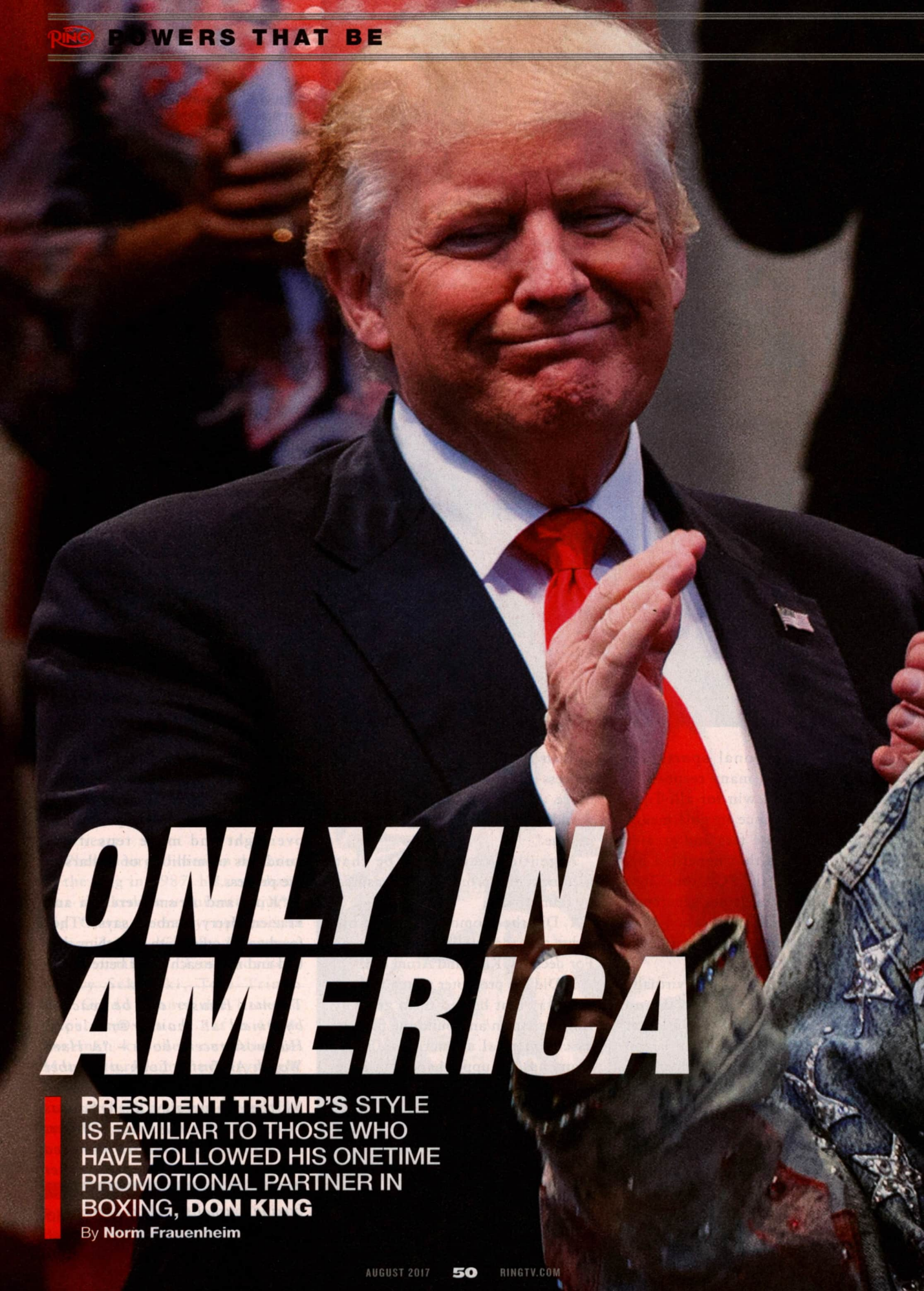
Just as Muhammad Ali was at his most important in the 1960s when he was a revolutionary force, King was at his most dynamic and important in the 1970s when, fresh out of prison, he redefined himself and boxing. With his extraordinary personal gifts, he could have been a great man. Instead, he settled for being a rich man and an icon.

"Culturally, what did King represent?" asks historian Randy Roberts. "Well, as King himself was fond of saying, 'Only in America!' Only in America could a loud, flamboyant black man recently released from prison, where he'd served three years for beating a man to death while he was one of the largest numbers racketeers in Cleveland, take over an industry that was ingrained in the fabric of America, become famous virtually overnight and make tens if not hundreds of millions of dollars in the process."

"King and Arum were Ali and Frazier," Jerry Izenberg says. "They fought each other with everything they had and made each other better." RING

Thomas Hauser can be reached by email at thauser@rcn.com. His most recent book – "A Hard World: An Inside Look at Another Year in Boxing" – was published by the University of Arkansas Press. In 2004, the Boxing Writers Association of America honored Hauser with the Nat Fleischer Award for career excellence in boxing journalism. He is currently a consultant for HBO Sports.

KING: RING MAGAZINE; COTTO: MARK J. TERRILL/AP



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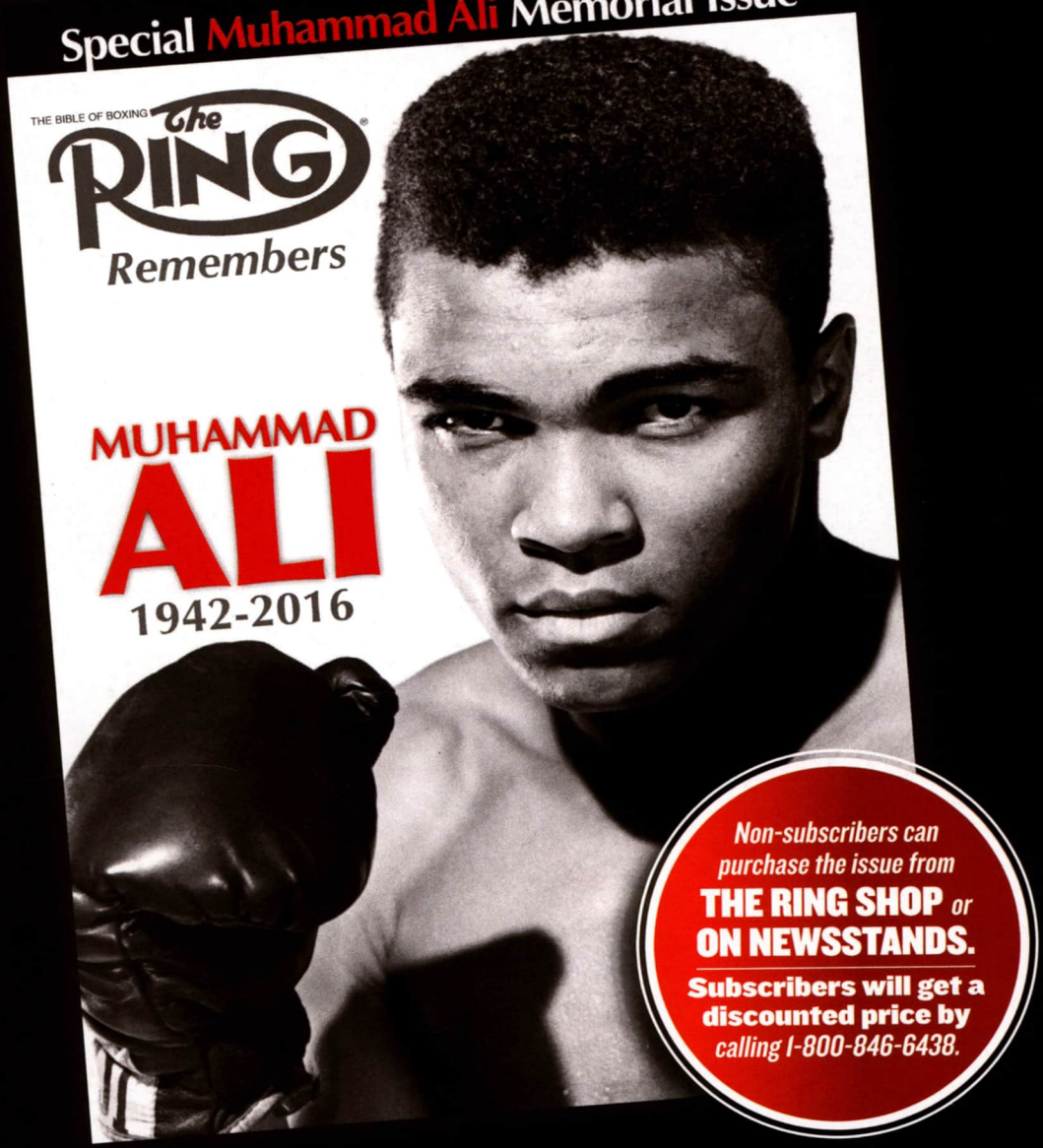

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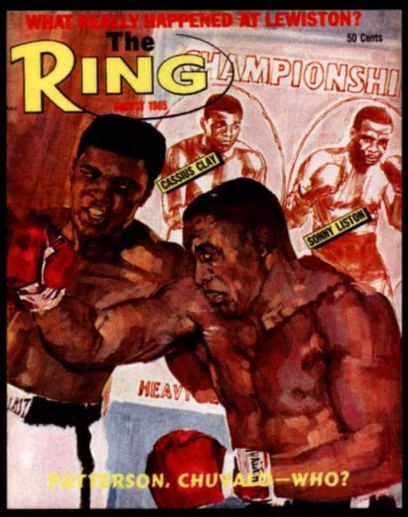

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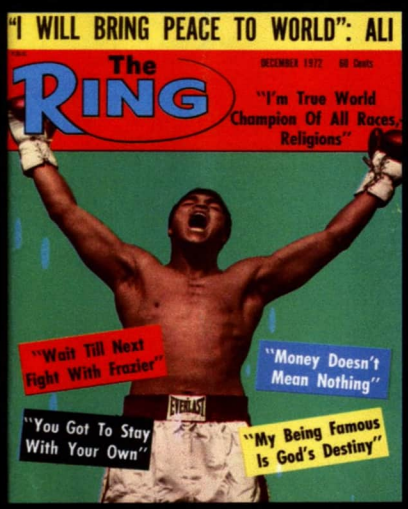

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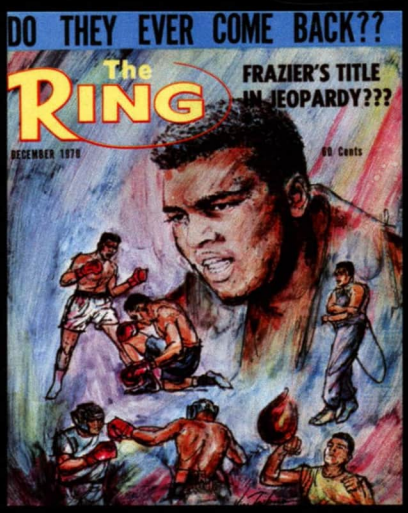

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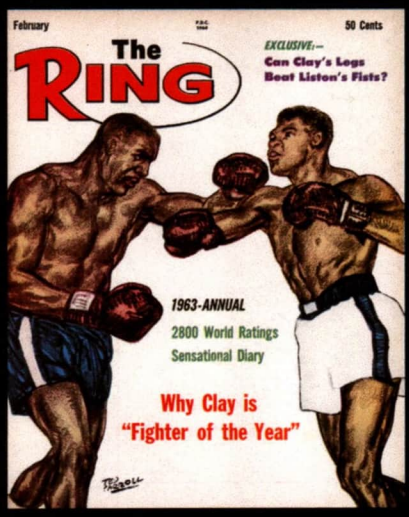

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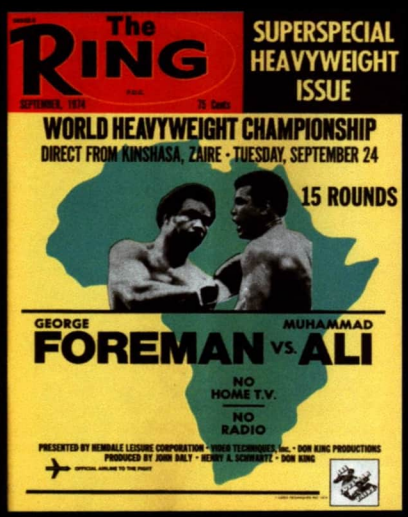

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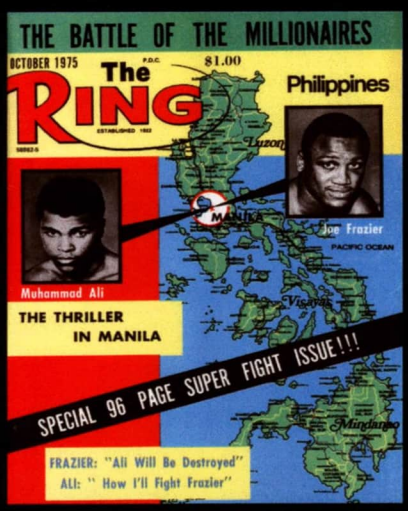

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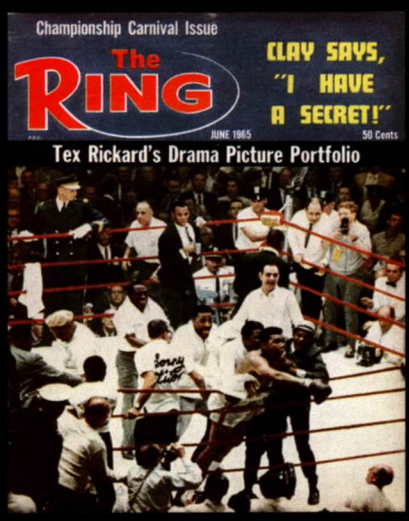

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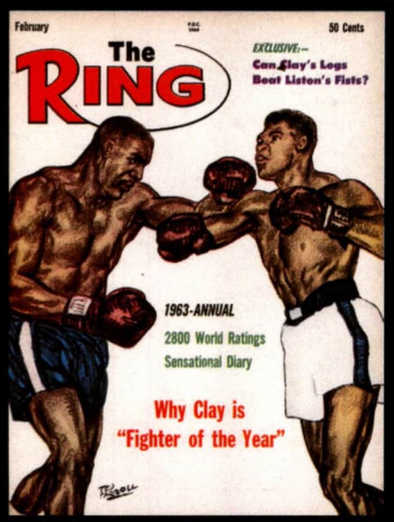

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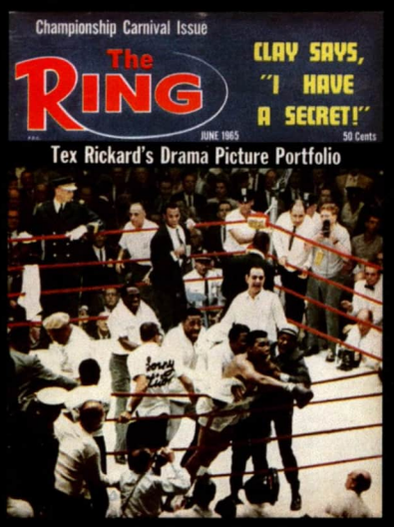


#9 AUGUST 2017

The 100-day mark has come, gone and maybe been forgotten beneath an endless avalanche of allegations, counter-allegations, executive orders, statements as suspicious as lousy scorecards and more tweets than legislation.

From day to exhausting day, Donald Trump's first few months as President and Counterpuncher-In-Chief have almost been familiar. Congressmen, senators and a press gallery full of political pundits might not recognize the daily chaos.

But anybody who has ever been around boxing for a while has been there, endured that and hoped – or prayed – to never do it again. Yeah, it's been a little bit like watching Don King in full filibuster.

Back in a day when that hair crowned his head like some ominous halo, the boxing promoter

Donald Trump and Don King seem to be two peas from the same pod.

King wears his loyalties on his jacket. At least that's what he wants you to believe.

JOHN LOCHER/AP

could talk louder and longer than a roster full of energized legislators determined to knock out a Supreme Court nomination with an interminable string of words, nonsensical and King-like in almost every way. From one malaprop or mixed metaphor to the next, King news conferences never seemed to end. They were as close to forever as just about anything could be.

He'd still be talking today, but fighters only get younger while he only gets older. Besides, it's an era when Twitter is the first line of communication. Imagine King trying to make a point within 140 characters. Brevity was never his style. You could read a good chunk of the Old Testament before he'd get around to introducing the main event. In a time when King's trademark hair is starting to look like a barren spot on an aging rug, Trump does most of the talking and all of the tweeting. The topics are different. The issues are a hell of a lot bigger.

But that over-the-top hyperbole has a familiar ring to it. It's almost as if America's 45th president learned it from the controversial promoter who is best known for saying "Only in America."

Tinker with that one a little, change it to "Make America Great Again," slap the redone version onto a red baseball cap and you've got a slogan for a presidential campaign that could win Only in America.

During his stunning campaign, Trump sought King's endorsement and said he had it even before King announced it.

"I'm the least racist person you ever met," Trump said during a rally in Tampa last June when he was again facing accusations of prejudice. "Believe me, I am the least racist person.

"I get a call yesterday, as an example. Street-smart guy, smart guy, but very street-smart – Don King, the boxing promoter. And Don King said, 'Donald, I am endorsing you for president.' You think Don King is going to endorse a racist?"

At the time, Trump's support among African-American voters was at 8 percent, according to NBC and Wall Street Journal polls. Trump went to King, seeking to alter some perceptions if not the numbers themselves.

King's initial reaction was surprise. Initially, he denied he had endorsed Trump. Then, he said he would. Sense a pattern here? First, the denial. Then, the endorsement. That's two headlines out of one story. Publicity of any kind is the First Commandment in any promotional handbook.

"I'm not Republican or Democrat," King said then and now. "I'm for the American people, a Republicrat!"

Then King appeared with Trump in Cleveland, when King uttered the forbidden N-word while Trump could be seen chuckling in the background of a CNN telecast. And there was King at Trump's so-called Southern White House, Mar-a-Lago, not far from King's old offices in Palm Beach.

In Florida, King wore a familiar denim jacket. It looked as if it has faded over the years. It was still covered with logos, pins, sequins and even a rendering of Mount Rushmore. Next to the sequins, for this appearance, King's jacket included a big campaign button with Trump's face on it. It wasn't on Rushmore, but it was close.

In his left hand, King also clutched a collection of flags. King would always wave flags, which would change to represent the nationalities of the marquee fighters on his cards. For his Florida appearance with Trump, he waved the American and Israeli flags.

King bellowed that Trump could play peacemaker in the immediate wake of increasing tension between outgoing president Barack Obama and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

"The Israeli flag is about peace," King said, almost as if he wanted the cabinet post that went to Secretary of State Rex Tillerson. "You know, peace in the Middle East."

At his side, there was the 70-year-old Trump, looking at the 85-year-old King as though he were an old mentor.

"You all know Don King?" Trump said in an apparent mix of affection and amusement. "Who doesn't know Don King?"

Questions don't get more rhetorical than that. Everybody knows King because for decades he made sure they would. King would be Trump's Secretary of Self-Promotion if the new president ever decided to create the post.

Longtime publicist Bill Caplan remembers King when he was just another guy. It was early in George Foreman's Hall of Fame career.

Caplan had been working for Foreman ever since the future heavyweight champion won an Olympic gold medal at the 1968 Mexico City Games. Foreman signed with King and Caplan agreed to also be King's publicist, the first in the promoter's turbulent career.

They were in a hotel in Oakland, getting ready for a Foreman fight. At the time, King had his hair cut in the close-cropped style that is as traditional as it is forgettable.

"But I remember one afternoon when Don spent a long time in the bathroom," Caplan said. "When he came out, there was that hair, rising

straight up, high off his head. He looked at me and said: 'What do you think, Bill?'

"After that, King would always say to me: 'Make me famous, Bill. Make me famous.'"

It's not clear what Caplan said when he first saw the hair, but in hindsight it was the genesis, the cutting edge of a style that loomed over boxing for three decades. Hairstyle identified The Beatles, then King. Why not a president? Trump has his own 'do to comb and market.

It was years and some gray later before two of the most identifiable looks in hair history would meet for the first time. Trump was a New York developer, rich, yet mostly known within his own community. By the time he decided to gain a foothold in Atlantic City and perhaps further his own celebrity, King had already gone global with the 1974 promotion of "The Rumble in the Jungle" – Muhammad Ali's historic victory over Foreman in Zaire. The promoter's distinctive hair had already transformed him into a business icon. Trump wanted to meet him.

King had Mike Tyson. Boxing was humming in the 1980s with Sugar Ray Leonard, Marvin Hagler, Roberto Duran and Thomas Hearns. But the face of the biggest money and celebrity was Tyson, who was frightening and fascinating all at once.

Trump had to have him to attract the crossover crowd that followed like an imminent accident. But to get to King, Trump had to go through Reverend Al Sharpton, a fellow New Yorker. Sharpton was friendly with Tyson and acquainted with King. Trump arranged to meet Sharpton, who agreed to introduce him to King.

Famously, it was Sharpton who first realized King and Trump were linked by more than just hair.

"The best way I can describe Donald Trump to friends is to say if Don King had been born white, he'd be Donald Trump," Sharpton told Politico. "Both of them are great self-promoters and great at just continuing to talk even if you're not talking back at them.

"Don King had me fly with him and Trump to Atlantic City in Trump's helicopter, and it was one of the most memorable things in my life to sit on that big, black Trump helicopter ... both of them talking nonstop, not listening to each other. And I'm sitting there. It was probably the longest ride ... I ever was on. Both of them shut me up. I haven't been quiet since."

Tyson fought at Trump Plaza Hotel in 1985, stopping somebody named John Alderson. He fought in Atlantic City, off and on, for the next five years, including a Trump-promoted Tyson stoppage of Michael Spinks in a bout at the Convention Hall that grossed $70 million, then a record.

It was in 1988 that Trump also announced that he was Tyson's "business adviser." The announcement was met with criticism from rivals and attorneys, who charged Trump with a conflict of interest. As the live-site promoter for Tyson bouts, he would be negotiating with himself for site fees and a percentage of on-site advertising. Sound familiar? Some pundits and attorneys argue a variety of conflict allegations exist today, especially in how the president has turned his businesses over to family members while simultaneously giving them positions in the White House.

Two years and two fights – victories over Carl Williams and Frank Bruno – after Trump became Tyson's adviser, Tyson suffered his first defeat, losing to Buster Douglas in Tokyo in one of history's biggest upsets. It stripped away Tyson's invincible aura. Two years after that, Tyson wound up in prison for three years on a rape conviction.

By then, however, Trump knew the boxing business. It's hard to judge just how much Trump's days as King's business ally created the president we have seen over his first few months in office. Still, it's hard to ignore the words, his claim of being a "counterpuncher" and even the theatrics.

A couple of examples:

Trump held a news conference at the CIA building in the immediate aftermath of his election. Trump friends reportedly filled the front seats. There were even reports that some were paid to be there to cheer. Anybody who has been to a King news conference – or any boxing news conference for that matter – has seen that crowd. Heard that crowd.

Then there's the issue of crowd sizes. Trump and his administration announced that his inauguration drew the biggest crowd in history, despite Park Service photographs that clearly show vacant seats and empty lots across Washington, D.C. Those photos could have depicted some of King's old crowds, which were announced as numbers that would've filled the building for cards with zero buzz. Sometimes the announced crowd was accurate, but only after a couple of buses jammed with people given freebies showed up at the front door.

The tricks are oh-so familiar, but we'll never know whether Trump learned them from King or is just a born promoter. That said, old rivals Bob Arum and Kathy Duva have an opinion of him that is hard to change. They say Trump stiffed them for $2.5 million in his promotion of Evander Holyfield's disputed decision over Foreman at the Convention Hall in 1991.

Trump paid too much for the bout, reportedly $11.5 million, in an apparent gamble that he hoped would reinvigorate collapsing casino revenues at his Taj Mahal. However, when Trump told Arum that he couldn't pay the contracted money, he blamed something else. Arum said he got a message from Trump saying the deal was off because of "an act of war."

Trump was referring to Desert Storm, the American invasion of Iraq in January and February of 1991. Holyfield beat Foreman on April 19 of that year. If Saddam Hussein's Republican Guard had stormed Atlantic City's beaches, Arum jokes, then Trump would have had his "act of war."

Instead, Trump saved $2.5 million and still got a fight that – according to Arum – made money for everybody. From Arum's perspective, Trump offered up an excuse that was a mere feint, a distraction. Depending on the pundit and the issue, Trump is accused of relying on the same tactic today, whether it's alleged campaign collusion with the Russians or a tweeted allegation about Obama wiretapping him.

Caplan has another take on it. He was there in Atlantic City working for Foreman in his comeback loss to Holyfield. He says the televised bout was an opportunity for some major face time, which might be as big a priority for Trump as the money.

"When we were putting it all together, the only thing Trump cared about was the location of his seat," Caplan said. "It had to be in a spot close to the camera. He just wanted to be on camera. For him, nothing else seemed to matter."

That, perhaps, links the two more than anything. If there's a chance to stand in the brightest spotlight, King and Trump will figure out how to get to the front of the line, climb into the illuminated circle and stay there for as long possible.

"For as long as I've known King, he has supported Republicans," Caplan said. "But I don't think that's because of politics. It's just because it's different. He knows he might get some access and he's sure he'll get noticed."

For the guy who Sharpton says would be Donald Trump had he been born white, getting noticed has been a lifestyle and the key to a career.

Trump achieved what few thought possible when he succeeded in his run for president. A couple of years ago, a President Trump seemed about as likely as a President King. Over a path full of striking similarities linking a president and a promoter, however, it happened Only in America. RING

THE TYSON FACTOR

President Donald Trump played a significant role in the career of Mike Tyson during his sensational rise to the heavyweight championship and shortly after he lost it, between 1985 and 1990. These are among the Tyson fights hosted by Trump.

July 11, 1985: Tyson TKO 2 John Alderson, Trump Plaza Hotel

Oct 9, 1985: Tyson TKO 1 Donnie Long, Trump Plaza Hotel

Jan. 24, 1986: Tyson TKO 5 Mike Jameson, Trump Plaza Hotel

Aug. 17, 1986: Tyson TKO 10 Jose Ribalta, Trump Plaza Hotel

Oct. 16, 1987: Tyson TKO 7 Tyrell Biggs, Atlantic City Convention Hall*

Jan. 22, 1988: Tyson TKO 4 Larry Holmes, Atlantic City Convention Hall*

June 27, 1988: Tyson KO 1 Michael Spinks, Atlantic City Convention Hall*

July 21, 1989: Tyson TKO 1 Carl Williams, Atlantic City Convention Hall*

Dec. 8, 1990: Tyson TKO 1 Alex Stewart, Atlantic City Convention Hall

*– Heavyweight championship defense. Note: Many believe that Tyson was at his best against Spinks. RING

RING MAGAZINE

Floyd Mayweather Jr. and Conor McGregor are two halves of what could be the most lucrative fight ever.

DARK COMEDY

FLOYD MAYWEATHER JR. VS. CONOR MCGREGOR WOULD ONLY BE THE LATEST IN A NOTORIOUS LINE OF 'FIGHTS' THAT ARGUABLY SHOULD NEVER HAVE HAPPENED »

By **Don Stradley**

MAYWEATHER: ISAAC BREKKEN/AP; MCGREGOR: JOE CORTEZ/AP

Most boxing writers and a good portion of the fans are cynical by nature, and nothing brings out their cynicism like Floyd Mayweather Jr. He's like a B-12 shot for cynics, giving them more energy to gripe. So it's no wonder people are jumping on him for preserving one of boxing's oldest rituals – the farce bout.

Mayweather has been inching up to a showdown with UFC star Conor McGregor with the patience of a python sneaking up on a tasty rodent. And McGregor, a worthy dance partner for Mayweather in terms of having a big mouth and closets full of expensive clothing, has done his share to churn up interest in such a meeting. One almost wishes McGregor, who did some boxing in his teen years as part of an Irish youth league, had pursued the sweet science just so we could have his dynamic presence in our own rings. However, McGregor hasn't looked impressive in the footage we've seen of him sparring. Some very fine and experienced fighters have faced Mayweather and couldn't touch him; a guy who has never boxed professionally isn't going to touch him either.

Still, the bout will attract not one, but two fan bases. Potentially, the numbers could be huge. Mayweather can again brag about being a pay-per-view phenomenon, forgetting that his feisty red-haired rival had something to do with it. The cynics will mention that Mayweather always forgets that his most impressive pay-per-view tallies were against popular fighters who drew the lion's share of the buys. The cynics will also grumble that this is no different than when Mayweather took part in WrestleMania XXIV, or that he should be fighting a more deserving opponent. But they'd be missing the point. Mayweather didn't invent the farce bout, any more than he invented gold jewelry. For as long as there have been great boxers with egos to feed and wannabes willing to be punched in the head, there have been absurdities like Mayweather-McGregor. The formula, which goes back 100 years or so, usually involves a ripened former champion against an inexperienced pug with just enough mystery about him to keep the suckers wondering.

Muhammad Ali was the farce master. After his first loss to Joe Frazier in 1971, he immediately started negotiating to fight NBA star Wilt Chamberlain that summer at the Houston Astrodome. The bout was on the verge of being signed when Chamberlain balked. Promoter Bob Arum went on record years later saying that Ali, who shouted "Timber!" every time he saw Chamberlain, had intimidated the basketball player. No matter. Ali would go on to have the ultimate farce bout in Tokyo against Antonio Inoki, a professional wrestler with a background in martial arts. Ali had been interested in fighting in Japan, but there were no Japanese heavyweights. When Inoki's promotional company came forward with an offer, Ali agreed. Why not? He'd always been a wrestling fan.

The circumstances in Ali's career at the time he fought Inoki cast light on all farce bouts. The watershed years of 1974-75 were behind him; in '76 he was tired, showing his age. He needed something that was more showbiz than boxing, just to keep his name in the headlines. In Inoki he had the right opponent. Or so Ali thought. The bout, held at the celebrated Budokan Hall, turned out to be a boring mess. Inoki scuttled around the ring like a crab while Ali called him rude names, the likes of which these days would get him banned from social media. Worse, Inoki landed several kicks on Ali's thighs; the resulting bruises and swelling sent Ali to the hospital. The "fight," a 15-round stinker, was declared a draw.

After the bout, a sheepish Ali faced the press. "Inoki didn't stand up and fight like a man," Ali told The New York Times. "If he had gotten into hittin' range, I'da burned him but good." The irony was that many opponents had said similar things about Ali. Now Ali knew how it felt to be Jerry Quarry, which may have been the only thing he learned during his bout with a wrestler. Ali got his name in the news, as he always did, but the reviews were harsh.

It could be that Ali had heard stories about a 1963 bout pitting Archie Moore against a wrestler named Mike DiBiase. In front of a scrubby crowd in Phoenix, Moore won by TKO 20 seconds into the third round. It was Moore's 219th professional bout. It was DiBiase's first.

Wrestler Andre The Giant (standing) battled boxer Chuck Wepner on the Muhammad Ali-Antonio Inoki card in 1976 in Tokyo.

TIM DAHLBERG/AP

Moore was hoping his farce would lead to better things. He was 50, broke, and wanted to fight a contender. It never happened. Instead, Moore finished his career against DiBiase. As one San Diego sports columnist summed it up, Moore was "shedding all semblance of dignity by doing a carnival routine for a Phoenix wrestling promoter."

Phoenix, incidentally, was where Roy Jones Jr. enjoyed his own farce of a bout. Will Jones ever live down his 2016 encounter with Vyron Phillips? A former MMA fighter with a smidgeon of amateur boxing experience, Phillips was chosen in an online vote to be Jones' opponent and guaranteed $100,000 if he could knock Jones out. Though Phillips entered the ring like a kid at the carnival ready to try the old "Test Your Strength" gimmick with a sledgehammer, Jones stopped him at 2:30 of Round 2. A farce, to be sure, but who is to say it wasn't a confidence booster for Jones? Just a few months earlier he'd been violently KO'd in Russia by Enzo Maccarinelli. Sometimes a fighter, even a future Hall of Famer, likes an easy win.

Maybe Jack Johnson was simply looking for an easy one in 1916 when he strolled into a Barcelona bullring to face an unknown commodity named Arthur Cravan.

Johnson had lost the heavyweight championship the year before and, partying heavily and nearing 40, wasn't in any condition to face a real fighter. A poet and magazine publisher who fancied himself a tough guy – he'd done some amateur boxing and had cheekily declared himself the "champion of Switzerland" – Cravan was a spotlight-whore who basically talked his way into the fight.

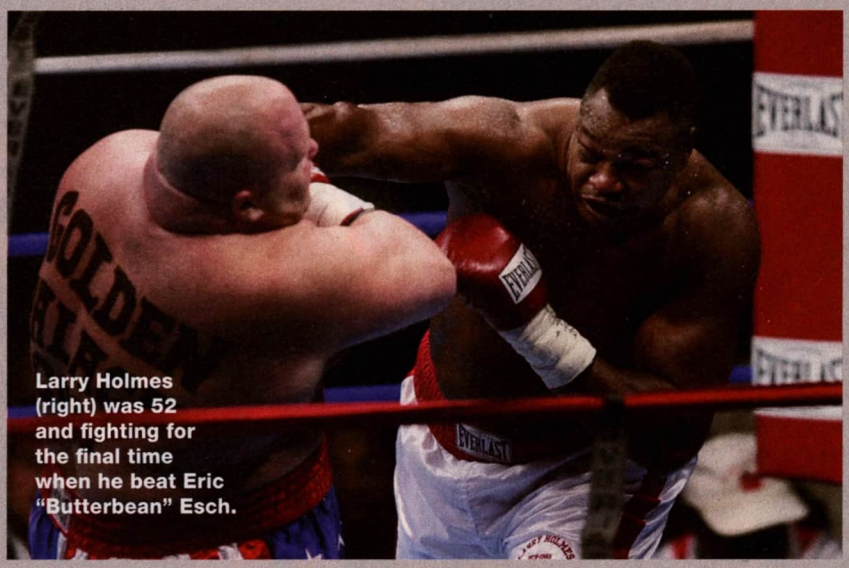
Johnson toyed with Cravan for five rounds before loosening up in the sixth. After Johnson landed a right described by one observer as "a blow worthy of a slaughterhouse," Cravan crumbled and was counted out. Later, he allegedly became friends with Johnson. Maybe that had been Cravan's wish all along, though he certainly went about it the hard way.

Not all farce bouts involve older fighters trying to make a quick buck against a beginner. Floyd Patterson's management thought they had an easy mark in Pete Rademacher, an Olympic champion who made his pro debut by challenging for Patterson's heavyweight title. Patterson, often chided for his camp's delicate approach to matchmaking, heard much grief from the press for taking on a man who'd never fought professionally. Still, the pairing of amateur vs. professional drew 16,961 to Sick's Stadium in Seattle on August 22, 1957. And in the second round, Rademacher electrified the crowd by putting Patterson on his ass. Of course, Patterson got up and proceeded to knock Rademacher all over the ring until the fight was finally halted at 2:57 of the sixth.

Patterson was a rarity in that his farce bout came early in his career. Most of the time, the farces come when the fighter has lost the shine of youth and just wants to fight somebody, anybody, who will fall easily. As bullying and manipulative as a politician rigging his own election, he'll approach his farce as if it were a life-and-death battle, a return to past glories. From this we gather that even if there's a stench around it, the thrill of victory is nice to revisit.

After losing most of his money in the stock market crash of 1929 and a divorce from actress Estelle Taylor, Jack Dempsey hit the exhibition trail in 1931. He took on local boxers across America in three- and four-round bouts. He also hired himself out as a referee, often in wrestling shows. The culmination of Dempsey's post-career activities was a July 1, 1940, promotion in Atlanta that

MORE FARCES



Larry Holmes (right) was 52 and fighting for the final time when he beat Eric "Butterbean" Esch.

A look at five dubious matchups involving prominent boxers that weren't mentioned in the accompanying article.

FRANK SLAVIN vs. FRANK GOTCH

DATE: September 25, 1901
LOCATION: Klondike, Yukon Territory, Canada
THE STORY: Slavin was a veteran heavyweight who had fought some of the best of his day, while Gotch was an enormously popular wrestler making his boxing debut. Slavin jabbed him bloody for several rounds until Gotch lost his temper and threw Slavin out of the ring. When the police intervened, Slavin was awarded a victory by DQ.

CHARLES "KID" MCCOY vs. HENRY PLACKE

DATE: April 5, 1904
LOCATION: Philadelphia
THE STORY: The legendary "Kid," with nearly 90 fights behind him, destroyed the gigantic Placke in two rounds. Though six inches taller and 70 pounds heavier, Placke was no match for McCoy. It could've been because the big man from Holland had only one fight on his record, and it had happened nine years earlier. (He lost that one, too.)

TONY GALENTO vs. FRED BLASSIE

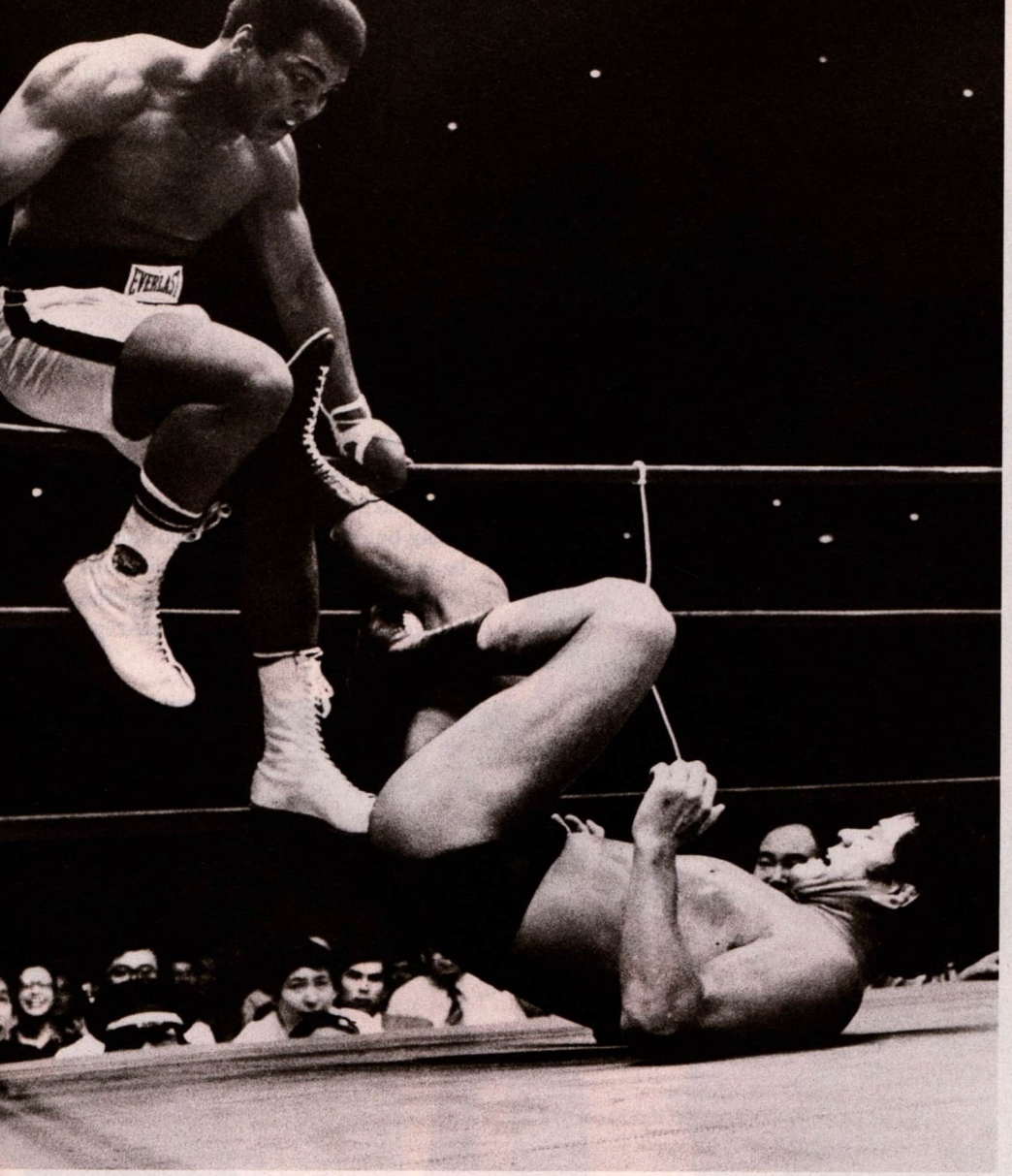
DATE: June 21, 1943
LOCATION: Knoxville, Tennessee
THE STORY: Blassie, 25 at the time, had never boxed professionally but was working on the professional wrestling circuit. As most know, he'd go on to become a revered figure in pro wrestling. In his memoirs, Blassie bragged about his boxing career, but this was his only official bout. Apparently Galento wasn't impressed. Near the end of his career and in his usual rotund shape, "Two-Ton Tony" KO'd "Fearless Freddie" in two.

BERT COOPER vs. JOE SAVAGE

DATE: April 22, 1994
LOCATION: Nanaimo, British Columbia, Canada
THE STORY: Cooper was a once-highly rated heavyweight contender on a downhill skid. Savage was a bareknuckle fighter from England who'd never worn gloves. Savage looked ridiculous, lumbering into Cooper's punches. A perfect left hook from Cooper put an end to the Brit's boxing career at 1:41 of the first.

LARRY HOLMES vs. ERIC "BUTTERBEAN" ESCH

DATE: July 27, 2002
LOCATION: Norfolk, Virginia
THE STORY: Holmes was a 52-year-old former heavyweight champion looking for a payday. "Butterbean" was a boxing novelty act, a 330-pounder who had never been beyond four rounds. Rickety Holmes threw enough jabs to win an artless 10-round decision over the self-proclaimed "King of the Four Rounders." Esch managed to put Holmes on the canvas in the 10th, but it wasn't enough to make this bout look like anything but a farce.



Inoki spent most of his encounter with Ali in this position, kicking at Ali's legs.

involved Dempsey against a pudgy wrestler named Clarence "Cowboy" Luttrell. With THE RING's founder, Nat Fleischer, serving as referee, and approximately 10,000 in attendance, Dempsey stopped Luttrell at 1:58 of the second round. No one took the event too seriously, though newspapers gave it big-time coverage with headlines an inch high. Some sources, including Dempsey's 1977 memoir, list it as Dempsey's last official bout.

After Luttrell, Dempsey took on a few more wrestlers, including Ellis Bashara, a former football lineman who had wrestled as "The Purple Flash." Why did Dempsey, one of America's great sports icons, bother with such bogus events? Some suggested he was angling for a bout with reigning heavyweight champion Joe Louis. Though several in the press enjoyed seeing Dempsey again, many didn't. The Chicago Tribune's Stewart Owen wrote that seeing Dempsey in these debacles was like seeing the great horse, Man o' War, "hitched to a garbage wagon." Dempsey explained his motivation to Newsweek's John Lardner. "I like putting a little money in my pocket," Dempsey said, "and I enjoy the action."

It was also a chance to show that his starpower hadn't entirely waned. Good-sized crowds paid to see Dempsey dust off these pretend palookas. Happy just to see him uncork the old left hook, they probably didn't ask for their money back.

Mayweather never mentions it, but he was probably stung that his final bout, a snoozer against Andre Berto in 2015, generated only mild interest. Even with Mayweather loudly declaring it would be his farewell, the public response was tepid. It's not like he was Ted Williams taking his final swings at Fenway, with John Updike writing about it for The New Yorker. Mayweather isn't that kind of sports figure. He just isn't. But he likes numbers, and in McGregor he's found someone who can help him surpass the less than a half-million buys he did with Berto. This time, Mayweather can sail into retirement on the wings of a big event. Also, don't discount the fact that when he leaves the ring that night he'll likely be 50-0. Again, he likes numbers.

McGregor is certainly many notches above the usual challengers drafted for farce bouts, but there is in Mayweather something of Ali looking for a way to keep his name in the news. And there's something of Jack Johnson and Archie Moore, past their primes, wanting to win without risking much. There's really nothing wrong with what Mayweather is doing. Great fighters have done it before him. He'll soak in some big-fight atmosphere and once again give his critics reason to complain. Unlike Dempsey, he won't have to bring his act all around the country. Thanks to the pay-per-view age, he need only do it once. But like the old Manassa Mauler, Mayweather will put a little money in his pocket and enjoy the action. RING

TIME TO SETTLE THIS

ANDRE WARD AND **SERGEY KOVALEV** FAILED TO MAKE A DEFINITIVE STATEMENT IN THEIR FIRST MEETING. THEY'LL HAVE ANOTHER CHANCE ON JUNE 17.

By **Ron Borges**

Nearly everything is debatable in boxing, but one thing is not: Nothing was settled by last November's light heavyweight title fight between Andre Ward and Sergey Kovalev except that they needed to square off again. That they are actually going to do that on June 17 is perhaps the most remarkable thing about this rematch.

Immediate rematches have never been harder to make than they are today but sometimes the need cannot be ignored. Such became the case for Ward and Kovalev the moment the crowd of 13,310 at T-Mobile Arena in Las Vegas began to boo a razor-thin but somehow unanimous 114-113 decision for Ward. Although the crowd had been mostly for Ward when the fight began, it was not by the time it ended, a fact Ward and the people around him could neither fathom nor overlook.

Crowds boo all the time in boxing but no amount of posturing, avoidance strategy, mumbling or politics could prevent both Ward and Kovalev from facing a simple truth: Nobody knew for sure who won their fight because very possibly nobody won at all. So neither could move on with anything resembling legitimacy until the issue between them was dealt with.

Even the often ill-mannered

COURTESY OF RINGNATION

Andre Ward (left) and Sergey Kovalev will be fighting for the vacant RING light heavyweight championship in their rematch.

management teams around them had to concede there was no other light heavyweight title fight for Ward to pursue that would not be overshadowed by the doubts of its legitimacy after a night where he was knocked down and hurt in the second round by Kovalev's crushing right hand and then lost most, if not all, of the first half of the fight. But the doubts about the outcome were not centered on him alone.

Over the final six rounds, Ward rallied in the way only great fighters can and made it close as Kovalev faded badly. Had Kovalev done enough to hold on? Did Ward pass the eye test, even though he'd won over three judges who many felt suffered from serious astigmatism themselves that night? When such questions must be asked, avoiding a rematch, thankfully, can become complicated.

In prizefighting, sometimes an eye test tells you more about what actually happened inside a boxing ring than the scorecards, and that appeared to be the case that night. Forget the predictably one-sided rants of HBO broadcasters Roy Jones Jr. and Max Kellerman. Forget the judges. Just look at the post-fight faces of Kovalev and Ward and you have to wonder who really deserved to wear the three belts – IBF, WBA and WBO – that Kovalev had when he entered the ring.

A LOOK BACK

Sergey Kovalev got the better of Andre Ward in the punch stats (barely) and in the hearts of fans, most of whom thought the Russian did enough to win on November 19. Ward won where it counted most, though – on the scorecards. Here is a look back at the CompuBox stats and scoring as we approach their rematch on June 17.

TOTAL PUNCHES LANDED/THROWN

Round	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Kovalev	7/34	16/49	4/27	9/37	7/33	9/36	7/29	10/38	11/46	21/58	12/40	13/47
	20.6%	32.7%	14.8%	24.3%	21.2%	25%	24.1%	26.3%	23.9%	36.2%	30%	27.7%
Ward	5/20	3/16	5/22	7/25	8/24	8/25	11/32	11/32	17/38	16/35	13/26	12/42
	25%	18.8%	22.7%	28%	33.3%	32%	34.4%	34.4%	44.7	45.7%	50%	28.6%

JAB LANDED/THROWN

Round	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Kovalev	4/22	5/23	2/15	3/22	3/17	3/17	1/10	4/20	4/22	11/33	5/22	3/19
	18.2%	21.7%	13.3%	13.6%	17.6%	17.6%	10%	20%	18.2%	33.3%	22.7%	15.8%
Ward	4/13	3/12	2/12	4/14	3/10	5/13	6/12	1/12	8/20	9/23	9/15	1/12
	30.8%	25%	16.7%	28.6%	30%	38.5%	50%	8.3%	40%	39.1%	60%	8.3%

POWER PUNCHES LANDED/THROWN

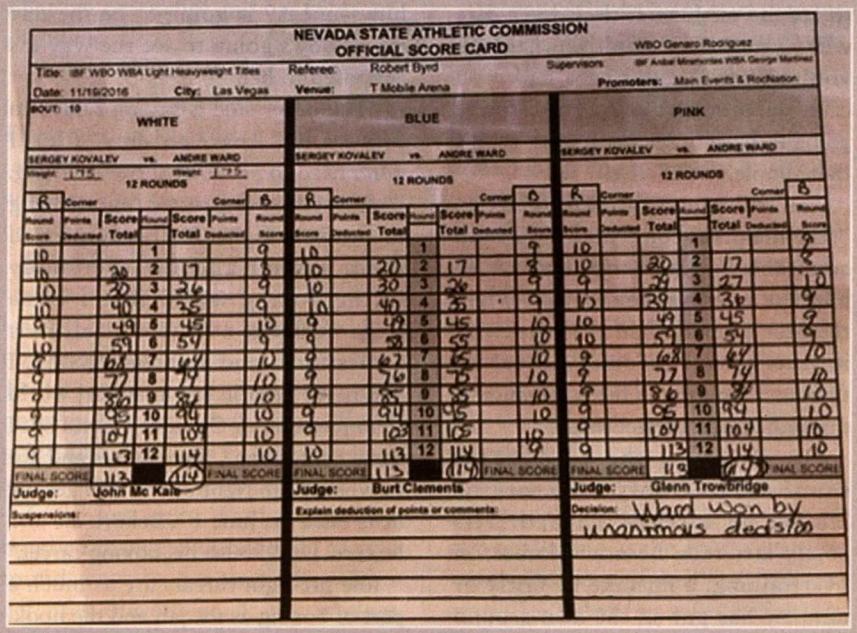
Round	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Kovalev	3/12	11/26	2/12	6/15	4/16	6/19	6/19	6/18	7/24	10/25	7/18	10/28
	25%	42.3%	16.7%	40%	25%	31.6%	31.6%	33.3%	29.2%	40%	38.9%	35.7%
Ward	1/7	0/4	3/10	3/11	5/14	3/12	3/12	10/20	9/18	7/12	4/11	11/30
	14.3%	0%	30%	27.3%	35.7%	25%	25%	50%	50%	58.3%	36.4%	36.7%

FINAL PUNCH STAT REPORT

	Total Punches	*Total Jabs*	*Power Punches*
Kovalev	126/474	48/242	78/232
	26.6%	19.8%	33.6%
Ward	116/337	55/168	61/169
	34.4%	32.7%	36.1%

JOE CAMPOREALE/AP

Ward (left) did his best work when he crowded Kovalev in their first fight.



NEVADA STATE ATHLETIC COMMISSION
OFFICIAL SCORE CARD

WBO Genaro Rodriguez

Title: IBF WBO WBA Light Heavyweight Titles — Referee: Robert Byrd — Supervisors: IBF Anibal Miranda WBA George Martinez

Date: 11/19/2016 — City: Las Vegas — Venue: T Mobile Arena — Promoters: Main Events & RocNation

BOUT: 10

WHITE							BLUE							PINK						
SERGEY KOVALEV vs. ANDRE WARD							SERGEY KOVALEV vs. ANDRE WARD							SERGEY KOVALEV vs. ANDRE WARD						
Weight: 175							12 ROUNDS							12 ROUNDS						
R	Corner				Corner	B	R	Corner				Corner	B	R	Corner				Corner	B
Round Score	Points Deducted	Score Total	Round	Score Total	Points Deducted	Round Score	Round Score	Points Deducted	Score Total	Round	Score Total	Points Deducted	Round Score	Round Score	Points Deducted	Score Total	Round	Score Total	Points Deducted	Round Score
10			1			9	10			1			9	10			1			9
10		20	2	17		8	10		20	2	17		8	10		20	2	17		8
10		30	3	26		9	10		30	3	26		9	9		29	3	27		10
10		40	4	35		9	10		40	4	35		9	10		39	4	36		9
9		49	5	45		10	9		49	5	45		10	10		49	5	45		9
10		59	6	54		9	9		58	6	55		10	10		59	6	54		9
9		68	7	64		10	9		67	7	65		10	9		68	7	64		10
9		77	8	74		10	9		76	8	75		10	9		77	8	74		10
9		86	9	84		10	9		85	9	85		10	9		86	9	84		10
9		95	10	94		10	9		94	10	95		10	9		95	10	94		10
9		104	11	104		10	9		103	11	105		10	9		104	11	104		10
9		113	12	114		10	10		113	12	114		9	9		113	12	114		10
FINAL SCORE		113		114	FINAL SCORE		FINAL SCORE		113		114	FINAL SCORE		FINAL SCORE		113		114	FINAL SCORE	
Judge: John Mc Kaie							Judge: Burt Clements							Judge: Glenn Trowbridge						
Suspensions:							Explain deduction of points or comments:							Decision: Ward won by unanimous decision						

When Kovalev arrived at the post-fight press conference to discuss this, his face was unmarked. He looked like someone getting ready to go into a ring rather than someone coming out of it. On the other hand, when Ward showed up he was wearing sunglasses at midnight.

Who won again?

Ward had been knocked down, his face was scraped and bruised and his eyes were puffy. He had rallied from a five-point deficit with six rounds to go on two scorecards but it was difficult to believe he'd swept those final six rounds. While there were some in the crowd and at ringside who had him winning a close decision, the majority did not and the crowd's lusty reaction made clear where they mostly stood.

"Everybody saw what happened," Kovalev said at the time. "Come on. Look at his face and look at my face. Everybody saw who won."

Well, not everybody. Three judges named Burt Clements, Glenn Trowbridge and John McKaie concluded Ward had done enough, albeit by the thinnest of margins. You certainly could argue Kovalev faded, because he did. You could argue that was a result of Ward wearing him down with roughhouse tactics on the inside too. But you could also argue wrestling is not boxing.

Ward would claim his inside work was superior, which it was, but it was not daunting. In the end, Kovalev outthrew and outlanded the former Olympic gold medalist. Add that he also dropped him and you had to wonder. Then you saw those sunglasses and you didn't wonder quite as much anymore because they call boxing the hurt business for a reason. Pain is the aim of the game.

Yet Ward made the fight close enough with his resilience and late rally that you could argue the decision from either side. Thankfully, that argument might not matter much

This is a rare matchup of the Nos. 1 (Ward) and 2 (Kovalev) fighters on the RING's pound-for-pound list.

longer because of the willingness of the fighters themselves.

Each man must at least have respect for the other after what happened between them last November. You'd never know it by listening to them, though. Posturing is the norm in boxing, but in the case of Ward and Kovalev there seems to be a deep, mutual dislike.

"I did lose respect for him with how he acts," Kovalev (30-1-1, 26 knockouts) said recently. "I feel like he's walking with a crown on his head. He thinks he's something. Nah, I don't like him. There's no reason to like him.

"I don't think he's anything. There was a moment before the first fight when I lost respect and now it has multiplied 100 times more. When he looks at me, I just want to punch him in the head. I have nothing to talk to him about. He does not deserve respect from me. I want to destroy him."

Kovalev has promised he will finish the job he started with that hard right hand last November, saying he will not only win this time but will end the 33-year-old Ward's career at the Mandalay Bay Resort and Casino in Las Vegas. There is a certain sneer on Kovalev's face that adds a touch of seriousness to his words, yet Ward remains unmoved.

"Boxing right now is not like it used to be," Ward says. "It's a climate right now where there's a lot of talking. Guys don't do what they say they're going to do. They don't perform and then they find excuses on why they didn't perform.

"There's only a handful of guys in history that I know that talked and then backed it up. We don't have a lot of that today. So it's OK to not be the loudest talker in the room, but when it's time to shine, be that guy.

"He can talk all he wants about ending my career. It sounds good. It sells pay-per-views. He just better be ready to stand by what he said and back it up.

"You've got perception and you've got reality. You've got a lot of misinformation coming from that side. You've got a lot of lies coming from that side. A lot of old-school tactics. It's 2017, man! All that old-school stuff that his side is trying to do, it's not going to work. They're selling fear but we're not buying it.

"At the end of the day, you've got to see me on June 17th. I don't care what you say. I don't care where you're from. I don't care how you came up. It doesn't matter, bro. You're going to have to see me June 17th. It's that simple."

The willingness of each fighter to "see" the other come June 17 is both admirable and welcome. It seems to happen so infrequently that when the best actually fight the best twice in succession it becomes difficult to fathom, even though the economics of this fight made perfect sense.

For Kovalev, the rematch is supposed to codify a victory he claims he already earned. His costly late fade he now blames on overtraining, a mistake he fairly or unfairly has put on the men around him and insists was a miscalculation that will not be repeated.

"I overrated Ward in the first fight," Kovalev says. "I did way too much. I thought that's the fight of my life and I overtrained myself for that fight. Now I know what I need to do to beat him. June 17 is going to be the day everybody's going to see the way it's supposed to be.

"The other side is saying I have to prove a lot. I have to show a lot. I don't need to prove or show anything. I showed and proved everything in the first fight. I already proved it for myself and for everybody in the boxing world that I came from nothing, nowhere at all as a professional and amateur boxing. I had never been in [an amateur] world championship or Olympic Games but I came here to the United States and got to where I am right now. I will get my belts back on June 17. Believe me and be sure. I will finish his boxing career."

Idle pre-fight threats are as much a part of boxing as the jab and the hook. Statements are made but as Ward points out, not often backed up.

"I hope he's the best he can be," Ward said of Kovalev. "I hope he makes the adjustments he's supposed to make. We're going to be ready. We're not taking it for granted. That's what big rematches and big fights are all about.

"I want the best Sergey. I want him to be focused. Let's see what happens. The question I have for him and his team is, with all that loud talking, who are y'all trying to convince? Me or him?"

In reality, both fighters know what the other is capable of. Kovalev learned the hard way why Ward has not lost since he was an adolescent. That's a two-decade run fueled not only by his skills but also a fierce pride and an ability to make in-fight adjustments when problems arise.

In the first fight, Ward was getting bombed from the outside but slowly found ways to penetrate Kovalev's defenses and out-quick him at close quarters. Just as Ward will have to come up with adaptations to avoid Kovalev strafing him with powerful shots at distance, Kovalev must figure out a better way to fight on the inside, because surely that is where Ward will want to be.

"He got off to a faster start than me but I plan on picking up where I left off in the first fight," Ward promises. "My goal this fight is to retain my belts and take all the excuses off the table. He's going to have to knock me out to beat me.

"Obviously the first fight was close but I don't feel like I'm out here to prove anything to anybody. I feel like what's gonna happen is gonna be academic. There's nothing in me that's questioning myself, 'Did you win?' It was a close fight that I won. There's no robbery."

Ward also said there are no excuses. He scoffs at Kovalev's talk of overtraining as the reason he grew weary at the end of their first fight. He agrees he faded but takes full credit for why.

"The only problem with that conclusion is I've seen multiple fights in which he fades late," Ward said. "As an athlete you never want to accept that someone was the better man. It's a hard thing to do, so I can understand after losing a close fight like that after being undefeated he's searching for answers."

Kovalev believes he has them. So does Ward. If they both do, it will be a hell of a fight. If only one does, it will be a confirmation of what each believes occurred last November. Either way, it had to happen.

"He didn't deserve the last victory," Kovalev says. "I want to retire him."

"There's nothing scary about this man," Ward snorts in return. "There's some weaknesses. There's some holes there we're going to tap into on June 17. He got what he asked for. Now leave the excuses home this time."

Both Sergey Kovalev and Andre Ward have what they asked for and what they need. They have each other. For a great champion to emerge, he needs an equal to test him. Neither Kovalev nor Ward believe the other is his equal, but they both know neither was clearly superior when last they met.

On June 17, each will have the rare chance to test himself again against an opponent with the skill and the will to win. What happens next is why we watch.

"I always knew that if we came across each other that it was going to be a tough fight, difficult fight, and a fight of attrition," said Virgil Hunter, Ward's trainer. "I expect the same thing June 17.

"I think Andre said it best: Somebody's will was going to be broken in that fight. So I guess all of the questions will be answered June 17. I guess this fight will pretty much settle it." RING

COURTESY OF RONATION

A NEW ERA

ANTHONY JOSHUA TOOK CHARGE OF THE HEAVYWEIGHT DIVISION IN A THRILLING WAR WITH **WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO** By **Elliot Worsell**

Much was made of the fist bumps and the winks and the private jokes and the big-bro/little-bro vibe between Wladimir Klitschko and Anthony Joshua ahead of their world heavyweight title fight on April 29 in London. Too friendly, they said. Too respectful, too boring.

But any fear this civility and decency would amount to a game of rock-paper-scissors rather than a championship prizefight was put to bed the moment Joshua and Klitschko decided to trade hard punches in the middle rounds of an incredibly dramatic encounter that culminated in the Briton retaining his IBF title (and claiming the vacant WBA title) with an 11th-round stoppage victory.

As a fight and a spectacle, it worked on multiple levels. It was, for starters, a coronation night not only for

AP

Anthony Joshua was the last man standing on April 29, which made him the most important heavyweight in the world.

Anthony Joshua, the most marketable boxer in Britain, but also the latest incarnation of the heavyweight division. Fresher, shinier, hipper, this promised land – a magical place in which exciting heavyweights actually exist – was first discovered when Tyson Fury dethroned Klitschko in 2015, but is now seemingly in safer and more reliable hands with Joshua. He does the right things. He says the right things. It's why 90,000 people flocked to see him at Wembley Stadium, England's national soccer ground, and why blue-chip sponsors like Beats by Dre, Lucozade and Under Armour are keen to attach themselves to his head, shoulders, torso and name.

The event also worked as a record-breaker. Attendance eclipsed the 80,000 fans who turned up to watch Carl Froch and George Groves settle a score in 2014 and the show, as a whole, benefited from that dress rehearsal three years ago. It was tighter this time, both in terms of structure and production, and was also cranked to 11 in the best way possible. While Klitschko, like Froch, cared little for the pyrotechnics and flame-throwers, choosing to march

to the ring with urgency rather than dilly-dally and milk the occasion, Joshua, in stark contrast, couldn't get enough of it. He connected with members of the audience, he loitered on the stage erected for him and his opponent, and he risked being charred by the giant letters – spelling "AJ," of course – which were ignited directly behind him. Quite the entrance, Joshua's apparent disregard for what was going on around him implied one of two outcomes: Either he was soon to be found way out of his depth, or, as was the hope of the majority of those 90,000 fans, this was to be his night.

Finally, and perhaps best of all, the fight worked as exactly that – a fight. Forget the hullabaloo, forget the obvious storyline (something to do with the passing of some torch) and forget also that record-breaking attendance figure tossed around so frequently. Forget all of that because, ultimately, when it came down to it, none of that mattered. The fight itself, an apology on behalf of the heavyweight division for its past disappointments, elevated two men on the grandest stage of all and did so thanks to a narrative that featured innumerable momentum shifts, knockdowns on both sides and a finish as definitive as it was abrupt. This was, for all intents and purposes, heavyweight boxing the way it should be. Scrap that. This was boxing the way it should be.

Nowadays predisposed to anticlimax, we, the spectators, were instead delivered something that didn't just live up to the hype, it somehow surpassed it. Don't forget, either, that this was a very different hype to the kind we are today force-fed. This wasn't hype generated by two boxers aware of the need to generate hype in order to flog a pay-per-view event and thus bolster their bank balances. This wasn't hype as a consequence of fabricated hate. Quite the opposite, in fact. This was hype of a purer kind. This was hype bestowed upon a fight for all the right reasons – hype as a by-product of a heavyweight championship contest between one current champion and one former champion, one young and one old, evenly matched.

Joshua and Klitschko eschewed the faux-hate approach because their personalities – low-key, pleasant, friendly – wouldn't allow it, but also because both knew there was no need to stoop that low in the name of making some extra money. They knew their fight, their product, would speak for itself and sell like no other. They were correct, too. We didn't need either of them to convince us the fight would be worth watching. We didn't need to be fooled or cajoled. There was no need for a sales pitch. In the end, nothing would persuade quite like our imagination and the visual in our head, that of Joshua, the most exciting heavyweight on the planet, standing opposite Klitschko – a polarizing figure, sure, yet one who had reigned as champion for nine years and had, for better or worse, come to represent the face of a division and a generation.

That the fight didn't flatter to deceive is a win for the quiet guys, the nice guys. It goes to show boxing doesn't have to be governed by animosity, whether true or scripted, nor do two boxers have to lie to us in order for us to do what we'd probably end up doing anyway. How refreshing that in lieu of far-fetched forecasts and general bluster, Joshua and Klitschko impressively refrained from labeling their fight a potential classic in the days and weeks preceding it and refused to make claims that they would hurt the other or retire them or, worse, put them in a hospital. How unusual.

Had we been told to expect Joshua to go after Klitschko in Round 5 and knock him down, only to gas and then be out on his feet as the bell tolled, we'd have still been impressed by the drama of it actually unfolding. But, by virtue of the fact Joshua and Klitschko had projected only respect and admiration beforehand, a dynamic which had some doubting the likelihood of true violence, this turning point in the fight meant so much more. Indeed, by the time Klitschko connected with a right cross in Round 6 to drop Joshua for the first time in his professional career – going some way to silencing an entire stadium – it was a wrap. We had a classic on our hands.

STADIUM SCRAPS

A throng of 90,000 packed Wembley Stadium on April 29 to witness the Anthony Joshua-Wladimir Klitschko fight. Here are 10 other memorable stadium fights in the U.K.

CASSIUS CLAY TKO 5 HENRY COOPER
35,000 at Wembley Stadium: **June 18, 1963**

MUHAMMAD ALI TKO 6 HENRY COOPER*
46,000 at Highbury Stadium in London: **May 21, 1966**

FRANK BRUNO TKO 8 JOE BUGNER
40,000 at White Hart Lane in London: **October 24, 1987**

LENNOX LEWIS TKO 7 FRANK BRUNO*
26,000 at Cardiff Arms Park in Cardiff, Wales: **October 1, 1993**

CHRIS EUBANK DRAW 12 NIGEL BENN*
47,000 at Old Trafford Stadium in Manchester, England: **October 9, 1993**

MIKE TYSON TKO 1 LOU SAVARESE
20,000 at Hampden Park in Glasgow, Scotland: **June 24, 2000**

JOE CALZAGHE UD 12 MIKKEL KESSLER*
50,000 at Millennium Stadium in Cardiff: **November 3, 2007**

RICKY HATTON UD 12 JUAN LAZCANO
55,000 at City of Manchester Stadium in Manchester, England: **May 24, 2008**

DAVID HAYE TKO 5 DERECK CHISORA
30,000 at Upton Park in London: **July 14, 2012**

CARL FROCH TKO 8 GEORGE GROVES*
80,000 at Wembley Stadium: **May 31, 2014**

*Denotes world title bout

No one expected the drama that would unfold when Klitschko (left) and Joshua squared up at the opening bell.

"I was just tired; I blew a gasket," remarked Joshua the next day. "He hit me with a nice right hand. It was more a shot I didn't see coming. All I thought was, 'Just get up.' I didn't even listen to the count. I just got up and thought to myself, 'Right, cool, I'm in with an experienced guy' – slip, slip, slip."

Admittedly, some rounds were short on action and at times resembled ghosts of Klitschko defenses past – the big Ukrainian center ring, left hand low, opponent on the move – yet somehow the piece as a whole felt different. There was an urgency and hunger on the part of both typically absent in most heavyweight bouts. Joshua, a man Eddie Hearn, his promoter, calls the biggest star in world boxing, needed to win in order to validate such hyperbole, whereas Klitschko, a man derided for years due to the tedium of his title fights, decided, at 41, there'd be no better time to throw punches he hasn't thrown for years and generally put on a show.

Ultimately, it was Joshua's desire to break the mold, do something different, that won it for him. In the company of the great Klitschko, he did the thing many others had promised to do but never actually got around to doing: He tried to win. In Round 11, with the fight still very much in the balance (Joshua led on two scorecards, Klitschko on one), he took a risk and ambushed Klitschko in a manner which – shock, horror – suggested he wasn't content to just coast to the finish line and place his faith in the hands of three ringside judges. We rubbed our eyes in disbelief.

"Klitschko was supposed to beat me in the later rounds," said Joshua the next day. "I'd never been there. So, for me, it was a good place to be to kind of challenge myself and say, 'Cool, I've never been here before and I'm going here against a good fighter who has been here many times. How do I manage and cope with it?'"

An uppercut from hell and two knockdowns later, Joshua had done the very thing he never boasted he'd do but always believed he'd do. He stopped Wladimir Klitschko at Wembley Stadium.

"After the fight, you embrace it all," said Joshua. "You embrace the whole atmosphere and 90,000 people. After the eleventh round, when I got the stoppage, you'll see me strolling back to the neutral corner and it was like I got a few seconds to myself. I got some water, thanked Rob (McCracken, his trainer), and everyone came in."

Twenty-seven-year-old Joshua, unlike Tyson Fury, the previous so-called heavyweight savior, is a man with his eyes wide open, a man savage in the ring and savvy away from it, a man who won't make a mess of this. An anomaly in some ways, the 2012 Olympic champion appears on the precipice of international superstardom, is being touted as the first billion-dollar boxer, yet still lives with his mom in Watford, England, and had to pay a $200 launderette bill the day after reportedly banking in excess of $20 million for his night at Wembley Stadium. He also seems committed to the sport and the heavyweight division, and respectful of its heritage and lineage, in a way others aren't.

"Do what Klitschko did," Joshua said when asked what was next. "Maintain, maintain, maintain. That's important. It's good to achieve it now, but what would be better for me is to just maintain it. That's what I said to Klitschko. For me, it's not a defining fight. It's just part of my journey. What more can we do? Who can we do it with? And how long can we do it? That's what I find interesting."

Interesting is definitely the word. In a division formerly anything but, things have all of a sudden gotten very, very interesting.

HALL OF FAME 2017

Trainer Johnny Lewis is still going strong at 73.

AUSTRALIA'S BEST

TRAINER **JOHNNY LEWIS** GUIDED JEFF FENECH, KOSTYA TSZYU AND OTHERS TO GREAT HEIGHTS

By **Anson Wainwright**

Johnny Lewis was a fledgling boxing trainer in the Sydney area when a teenager named Jeff Fenech walked into his gym. Their lives were never the same after that.

Lewis, a caring man with a knack for teaching the sweet science, guided his raw protege to the 1984 Olympics and then to profound success as a pro. It was the first major step in a training career that ultimately would include six world titleholders and a ticket to the International Boxing Hall of Fame in Canastota, New York. Lewis will be inducted in June.

"I was taken aback, I was so nonplussed by it," said Lewis, referring to his reaction when he was told he'd been elected to the Hall. "I'm just so proud to be inducted and be with some of the real greats of boxing.

"I never in my wildest dreams thought I'd have a world champion, never mind a few of them."

Indeed, Lewis has come a long way.

He grew up in the working-class town of Erskineville, a suburb of Sydney, and discovered boxing at the Newtown Police Boys Club when he was 13. It was love at first sight. He learned the rudiments of the sport as a boxer before turning to coaching at 17.

Lewis was making his living as a sign painter when he met Fenech, who had never boxed before. The young trainer honed his student's skills and, after fewer than 30 amateur fights, Fenech qualified for the Los Angeles Games.

Fenech didn't medal but his promise was evident, prompting him to turn pro a few months after the Olympics. Only seven fights later, he stopped IBF bantamweight titleholder Satoshi Shingaki to become the first 1984 Olympian to win a world title.

With Lewis by his side, Fenech would finish as a three-division titleholder and recognition as the greatest Australian fighter ever. He was inducted into the Hall of Fame in 2002.

"For the work he's done in boxing in Australia, he deserves that plus a medal," Fenech said of his cornerman. "I was 17 and I'd never boxed in my life. I went to the youth club and it changed my life. It was more like a father-son relationship than boxer-trainer. We spent every day, all day together. He took me from the streets and turned me into what I am today. He did an amazing job. Without me meeting him I'd more than likely be in jail today.

"All his life has been boxing. He's given his life to the kids whether they were the best boxers or the worst boxers. He gave his life and time to all of them."

Lewis coached the Australian amateur team in the 1989 World Championships, where he discovered his next prize pupil.

"Kostya (Tszyu) got beat by a kid from Germany," Lewis said. "I remember when I came back and I

HALL OF FAME: CLASS OF 2017

MODERN

MARCO ANTONIO BARRERA
ACTIVE: 1989-2011
RECORD: 67-7 (44 KOs)
BACKGROUND: The "Baby-Faced Assassin" was one of the most consistent fighters of his generation, as he won seven major titles in three weight divisions over more than two decades. And he never shied away from a challenge. He's best known for his thrilling trilogy with countryman Erik Morales, whom Barrera defeated twice, but his resume is filled with big names. He was a smart boxer with great fighting spirit, a combination that made him a fan favorite.

EVANDER HOLYFIELD
ACTIVE: 1984-2011
RECORD: 44-10-2 (29 KOs)
BACKGROUND: Holyfield was indeed the "Real Deal." He is recognized as the best cruiserweight of all time – he was 18-0 (14 KOs) at 190 pounds and was unified champion – and then became the only heavyweight to win the title four times, giving us some of the most memorable fights ever along the way. One can only imagine what he would've accomplished if he was a natural heavyweight. As it was, his blend of ability, ferocity and resilience made him one of the best ever.

JOHNNY TAPIA
ACTIVE: 1988-2011
RECORD: 59-5-2 (30 KOs)
BACKGROUND: Tapia, who died at 45 in 2012, is known for living on the edge outside the ring. That's where his nickname – "Mi Vida Loca (My Crazy Life)" – comes from. The craziness sometimes eclipses his remarkable ability and warrior mentality, though – he won major titles in three divisions in entertaining fashion. Tapia was a good athlete and excellent technician who loved to fight, all of which made him very difficult to beat and a major attraction during his peak.

OLD-TIMER

EDDIE BOOKER
ACTIVE: 1935-44
RECORD: 66-5-8 (34 KOs)
BACKGROUND: Booker was among the best on an all-too-long list of black fighters who received relatively few opportunities in boxing. He made the most of the ones he got, though, mostly on the West Coast. "Black Dynamite" was a superb boxer – particularly his defensive skills – but wasn't afraid to mix it up when he had to. He proved it against some of the best fighters of his era, beating Lloyd Marshall, Holman Williams and the legendary Archie Moore, among others. He never fought for a world title, but those who saw him fight know how special Eddie Booker was.

NON-PARTICIPANT

JIMMY LENNON SR.
POSITION: Ring announcer
BACKGROUND: It's no secret where Jimmy Lennon Jr. got his silky voice and professionalism. Dad, who joins his son in the Hall, was a beloved announcer for more than three decades.

JOHNNY LEWIS
POSITION: Trainer
BACKGROUND: Lewis is a boxing institution in Australia, as he has trained fighters there for more than a half century. Among his many proteges: Joe Bugner, Jeff Fenech and Kostya Tszyu.

JERRY ROTH
POSITION: Judge
BACKGROUND: The recently retired Nevada judge worked a reported 225 world title fights over three and half decades at ringside, making him one of his state's leading officials.

OBSERVER

STEVE FARHOOD
POSITION: Broadcaster and journalist
BACKGROUND: The former editor of THE RING Magazine is an accomplished writer, editor, historian and television analyst known for his depth of knowledge and integrity.

BARRY TOMPKINS
POSITION: Broadcaster
BACKGROUND: Tompkins has one of the most recognizable voices in boxing, as he has called some of the biggest fights in the sport since 1980. He is still going strong.

said to Bill Mordey, 'I saw a kid over there from Russia. I think he could be the real goods. He's got a lot of skills and he can bang a bit and he'll be an excitement machine.'

"We kept that in mind, and I think it was 1991, when they came over [to Australia] for the World Championships, that Kostya decided to stay and achieve the levels that he did."

Tszyu eventually unified three junior welterweight titles and the RING championship under Lewis' tutelage and also landed in the Hall of Fame in 2011. He was pleased to hear that Lewis would be honored.

"I think he's deserves it," Tszyu said. "He is a great man. That's the most important thing. We had a very good connection, we had a good trust in each other."

Lewis also worked with world titleholders Gairy St. Clair, Billy Dib, Jeff Harding and one more Hall of Famer, Virgil Hill, a two-division champ. And, even at 73, Lewis isn't finished. He is currently working with an unbeaten young pro named Bilal Akkawy.

He still loves it – all of it.

"There are so many people that have walked in and out of our gym … but our rapport is everlasting," he said. "That's the one thing I can really say is great about boxing. Success is paramount but the friendships with different people all around the world, that's what makes the sport so great.

"I'm very humbled to be a Hall of Fame inductee. If I went tomorrow, I'm sure I'd have a smile on my face. It was all worthwhile." RING

Questions and/or comments can be sent to Anson at elraincoat@live.co.uk and you can follow him at twitter.com/AnsonWainwright

HALL OF FAME PROFILES

MARCO ANTONIO BARRERA: bit.do/marco-barrera

EDDIE BOOKER: bit.do/eddie-booker

STEVE FARHOOD: bit.do/steve-farhood

EVANDER HOLYFIELD: bit.do/evander-holyfield

JIMMY LENNON SR.: bit.do/jimmy-lennon-sr

JOHNNY TAPIA: bit.do/johnny-tapia1

BARRY TOMPKINS: bit.do/barry-tompkins

EDITOR'S NOTE: The Canelo Alvarez-Julio Cesar Chavez Jr. fight – and the subsequent announcement that Canelo will fight Gennady Golovkin on September 16 – occurred as this issue was going to press. THE RING will provide further coverage in the September 2017 issue.

PRELUDE TO DESTINY

THE **CANELO ALVAREZ-JULIO CESAR CHAVEZ JR.** FIGHT WAS A DISAPPOINTMENT BUT IT PRODUCED SOMETHING GRATIFYING: A DATE WITH **GGG** IN SEPTEMBER

By **Michael Rosenthal**

ERIK VERDUZCO/AP

The hype leading up to the September 16 Canelo Alvarez-Gennady Golovkin showdown began immediately after Canelo shut out Julio Cesar Chavez Jr. (below).

Canelo Alvarez had just battered Julio Cesar Chavez Jr. from post to post, round by uncompetitive round in a fight that was more of a mismatch than even the worst cynics expected, and was answering questions from HBO's Max Kellerman in the ring.

"I'm just told that there is a plan in place for your next opponent," Kellerman said over the loudspeakers at T-Mobile Arena in Las Vegas, stirring a suddenly curious crowd of 20,510. "Who is it?"

Canelo's response saved a disappointing night and set the social media world on fire:

Canelo didn't have to wait for the referee to raise his hand after his thorough victory over Chavez.

"Golovkin, you are next, my friend." The crowd erupted.

A horrible fight was followed immediately by the surprise announcement for which the boxing world has waited to hear for more than a year, that the biggest-possible event in the sport had been made and would take place on September 16.

Canelo's RING middleweight championship and Golovkin's three sanctioning body titles will be on the line.

"I told you it was going to happen in 2017. I told you," said a giddy Oscar De La Hoya, Canelo's promoter, obviously pleased to put to rest the notions that his fighter was afraid of GGG and the fight might never be made.

The hype had already begun.

Golovkin stepped into the ring after Canelo made the announcement and the two would take part about an hour later in a press conference on the very spot where their fight might occur, although no site had been selected at that time.

The fighters and their handlers said what you'd expect them to say: They're pleased to be part of the event, which will give the fighters an enormous stage to display their talents and generate a large fortune for all those involved to share.

And there had to be some level of relief: Canelo had to get past Chavez for the September fight to happen.

Canelo was a 4-1 favorite to beat his countryman on the day of the fight, down from 7½-1 during the week, meaning the late betting was on the bigger, presumably stronger son of the great Julio Cesar Chavez Sr.

No one believed beforehand that Chavez could match Canelo in terms of ability but some wondered whether Junior's size would be the equalizer. They both weighed in at 164 pounds – half a pound less than the agreed-upon catchweight – but Chavez might've outweighed Canelo by 15 pounds or more on fight night.

Canelo, essentially a junior middleweight until now, would be facing a de facto cruiserweight in the ring. Could he take Chavez's power shots? Could his own punches hurt the bigger man? Would the weight difference simply wear him down? These were legitimate questions, which led many to believe Chavez had a chance.

The weigh-in on Friday at the MGM Grand Garden Arena was evidence of that. An estimated 5,000 fans, many wearing T-shirts or headbands revealing their loyalties and some waving Mexican flags, were highly charged. They obviously were primed for a real, action-packed battle.

The same was true during the ring walks and early in the fight, when booming, alternating chants of "CANELO! CANELO! CANELO!" and "CHAVEZ! CHAVEZ! CHAVEZ!" shook T-Mobile Arena.

The enthusiasm died an early death, though. It became clear by the second or third round that this wasn't going to be competitive. "The Fight for Mexico" wasn't a fight after all.

Canelo demonstrated almost immediately that Chavez's natural advantage was meaningless; superior ability completely trumped size, as many expected. Canelo was too quick, too smart, too good for an opponent with only journeyman tools. The only time Chavez was able to score was when he was allowed to, when a seemingly bored Canelo rested with his back against the ropes and covered up. And even then Chavez did no damage.

Chavez's inherent toughness and reluctance to mix it up with Canelo allowed him to reach the final bell on his feet, but the result was a brutal beating and one of the most onesided fights you'll ever see on this level. The final scores painted an accurate picture: All three judges scored it 120-108, a shutout.

The CompuBox statistics also weren't pretty. Canelo outlanded Chavez 228-71 in total punches, or 19-6 per round. Chavez landed in single digits in each of the 12 rounds, three or fewer in four of them. Feeble.

The fans in attendance, who had so much hope, went largely quiet as the inevitable came into focus. And by the end, there were boos. Loyalties aside, they wanted to be entertained. Instead, they witnessed the same thing round after round, an elite fighter having his way with an opponent who had no business being there.

Chavez, his face (and ego) bruised and left eye almost closed shut, tried to maintain his pride but acknowledged the painfully obvious immediately afterward in the ring: "He's very good and he beat me."

But is he good enough to beat Golovkin?

That's the question everyone raised only a few minutes after the fight ended, when Canelo's announcement turned a disappointing night into something positive and fascinating. The fight for which so many had clamored was a done deal.

Why is it so big?

Canelo (49-1-1, 34 knockouts) is arguably the biggest attraction in the sport. He is hugely popular in the biggest market in boxing, among Mexicans and Mexican-Americans. And Golovkin (37-0, 33 KOs) has built a strong following largely on his punching power, which had produced 23 consecutive knockouts until Daniel Jacobs took him the distance in his most recent fight.

The Canelo-Golovkin backstory also has sharpened the anticipation. After defeating Amir Khan a year ago Canelo gave up his WBC middleweight title rather than agree immediately to defend his belt against Golovkin.

The WBC had given him only a few weeks to reach a deal with GGG, which Canelo deemed inadequate. Many in the public didn't buy that, though; they saw Canelo's decision as a way to dodge Golovkin and battered him relentlessly on social media and in comment sections of internet articles.

That's why Canelo used the word "fear" three times in three sentences immediately after his victory over Chavez. He was determined to set the record straight.

"I've never feared anyone," he said. "... When I was born, fear was gone. I never got my share of fear."

Well, if he was afraid before, he evidently isn't now. And that's good news to Golovkin and his handlers.

"The fight is a long time in the making," said Tom Loeffler, Golovkin's promoter. "... They were true to their word. They've been saying since last year that the fight would take place in 2017. And here we're making the announcement. There couldn't be a bigger announcement in boxing."

No one is happier than Golovkin.

GGG is recognized as one of the best fighters in the world – maybe the best – but he's 35 and has yet to take part in anything close to a superfight, one that would provide an opponent against whom he could prove he is a great fighter and earn him the eight-figure payday he probably always envisioned.

With the clock ticking, he had to wonder whether his day would ever come. And that undoubtedly extended into the Canelo-Chavez fight. Any anxiety the Kazakhstani might've been feeling probably dissipated by the third or fourth round, when it became fairly clear that Chavez was out of his league.

Golovkin doesn't have much to say in English but his smile was telling at the press conference.

"Right now, everybody is excited. I'm very happy. ... This is the biggest fight in boxing," GGG said.

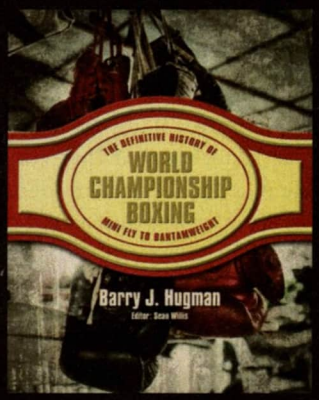
Canelo seemed relieved.

"First of all, I want to say I'm happy that the fight is finally here," he said. "A lot of you said it wouldn't be made. I'm very happy to give fans another great fight, which is the only thing I want in my career."

We'll take it. RING

A MONUMENTAL WORK

FOUR-VOLUME PROJECT — CHRONICLING EVERY CHAMPIONSHIP FIGHT FROM 1870 TO 2016 — IS THE RESULT OF 30 YEARS OF RESEARCH.



"THE DEFINITIVE HISTORY OF WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP BOXING"
G2 Entertainment Ltd. Written by Harry Hugman, edited by Sean Willis

The word "magnificent" really doesn't do justice in trying to describe boxing historian Barry Hugman's epic four-volume series titled "The Definitive History of World Championship Boxing." This monumental work – 30 years in the making – traces the trajectory of the world's most colorful and toughest sport by documenting and describing every world championship contest from 1870 to 2016. The result is the most comprehensive and detailed history of world championship boxing ever written.

Each of the four volumes is devoted to specific weight classes: Vol. I – mini flyweight to bantamweight; Vol. 2 – junior featherweight to lightweight; Vol. 3 – junior welterweight to middleweight; Vol. 4 – super middleweight to heavyweight. This massive compendium (each volume is about 500 pages) delivers much more than a simple listing of names, dates, venues and results. Yet despite the enormous amount of information contained, it is designed and written in an attractive and readable style.

The author begins by explaining how each weight class evolved. He then lists, in chronological order, every title fight within that weight class. But that is just the beginning. He also includes a brief summary of the fight, enabling the reader to understand what actually happened. To be able to read in one volume an accurate summary of so many title fights is a tremendous gift to curious fight fans, journalists and historians.

Unless one understands boxing technique and strategy, it is not easy to accurately describe the ebb and flow of a bout in one or two paragraphs, but that is what the author accomplishes for virtually every championship contest. And that's just one reason this collection makes for such a delightful reading experience. Open to any page and you will be richly rewarded. Here is an excerpt describing the second middleweight title bout (1924) between champion Harry Greb and challenger Johnny Wilson: "Up until the seventh round the challenger looked a sure winner, having sickened Greb (159) with terrific southpaw lefts to the body while setting him up for an eventual knockout." If you want to know how Greb pulled out a victory, it's on Page 407 of the third volume.

Here is an excerpt describing the 1904 welterweight title bout between champion Joe Walcott and challenger Sam Langford (their bout ended in a 15-round draw): "Regardless of the official result Langford clearly outpointed Walcott, dropping his rival on one knee in the third, while hammering him with lefts and rights to keep him bleeding throughout. Langford, who had the advantage of the longer reach, also cleverly avoided many of the blows coming his way by good footwork. A draw had earlier been agreed if both men were still standing at the final bell."

We then learn that Langford issued a "winner take all" challenge to Stanley Ketchel, who had the strongest claim to the middleweight championship, and to every other middleweight title claimant, but was ignored. Langford then decided to compete against heavier men.

Each volume includes an explanation of the level of legitimacy and recognition accorded to the various title claimants, especially prior to 1920 when regulations were lax and fighters sometimes anointed themselves champions after defeating a top contender. Hugman is a dogged researcher and a stickler for accuracy. He sets the record straight in many instances, correcting previous errors and misconceptions. Such a monumental task could not have been achieved alone, and the author recognizes the research contribution provided by other noted historians, especially Harold Alderman MBE (the foremost expert on English championship boxing from 1870 to 1909), Tracy Callis and Luckett Davis (two of America's top boxing historians) and John Sheppard of BoxRec.com.

These wonderful volumes represent the most important boxing document of its kind. Barry Hugman and his fabulous team of boxing historians have left an invaluable legacy. RING

Mike Silver is the author of "The Arc of Boxing: The Rise and Decline of the Sweet Science" and "Stars in the Ring: Jewish Champions in the Golden Age of Boxing."

"Definitive History" chronicles all major championship fights big (such as this one between Ray Robinson and Jake LaMotta) and small.

WITNESS TO HISTORY

JOSHUA VS. KLITSCHKO: 'ARGUABLY THE GREATEST HEAVYWEIGHT FIGHT EVER ON BRITISH SHORES'

The 90,000 at Wembley Stadium to witness Anthony Joshua (right) vs. Wladimir Klitschko had to feel fortunate.

Well, there we are. Boxing has a new superstar. Just like that. Anthony Oluwafemi Olaseni Joshua, as humble as he is heroic, as gentle out of the ring as he purports to be brutal in the squared arena, will now live a changed life. The key for me – and I have spent significant time around him recently – is that he is barely affected by the success and attention.

The afternoon after the fight, I spent a couple of hours in his company with a few others close to him in a large rented house among a row of homes rented by ambassadors and global diplomats in swanky St John's Wood in central London. His attitude and humility were staggering. No boastfulness. He asked us questions, wanting to know how exciting his fight against Wladimir Klitschko at Wembley Stadium was. He had loved it.

As we talked, flanked by promoter Eddie Hearn, Joshua said he wanted to move global when the time is right. Hearn said the U.S., China, Africa and the Middle East are viable fight locations going forward. Joshua is a thinker, a firm all of his own, and the 27-year-old will make the decisions. Simple as that.

The fight night atmosphere was genuinely electric. It was a slow burn until the main event. Being a few feet away from the action on April 29, with a tsunami of noise and energy directed down toward the ring where the drama unfolded, with Klitschko down in Round 5 and Joshua in 6, and then the Englishman seemingly gone for nine minutes, and then back to unleash hell and end the fight in Round 11.

Being close to it was like an out-of-body experience. It will have to rank as one of the greatest working moments of my life. It was a "where was I when ..." moment, certainly so if AJ goes on to fulfill his fistic ambitions and good works outside the sport that drive this young man.

So, to the fight. It was as glorious as it was thrilling as Joshua became a new star, much more because of his comeback against Klitschko than if he had eviscerated the old champ in Round 5.

Both men delivered a heavyweight contest for the ages, with old-timers telling me the drama and the night make it worthy of comparison to the first and third fights in the trilogy between Muhammad Ali and Joe Frazier. And I'm adding the first Riddick Bowe-Evander Holyfield war for its drama, changing pace, gripping narrative and the see-sawing nature of a heavyweight battle that lived up to the very little hype it needed. That was remarkable in itself, as no matchup in Britain has ever grown to such a major event with no verbal warfare to elevate it.

This was arguably the greatest heavyweight fight ever on British shores, and Joshua answered emphatically five major unknown questions about himself as a work in progress, against an elite opponent for the first time. We now know that he has a chin, heart, stamina, bravery and a temperament of nervelessness.

Joshua does not appear to suffer from anxiety, as the much-loved Frank Bruno once did (and Joshua is going to be equally

adored by the British public). It is the confidence that comes from knowing he has been through it, mentally and physically, and come out the other side. Then there was the bravery with which he fought back, his second wind helping him destroy Klitschko in an 11th-round assault. It was then that his stamina and fitness showed as his powerful hooks and exchanges tore into the 41-year-old, who by then felt the age in his legs. Klitschko provided the overall test both Joshua and boxing aficionados wanted to witness. We had it in droves. And for that reason Joshua can now be considered 'the real deal' as a heavyweight champion.

One even bigger question now remains: How long can he sustain it? If the gargantuan figure can claim the throne in full, it will make him a global star.

PRINCE HARRY

The noble art received a Royal decree and stamp of authority here in recent weeks when Prince Harry revealed that he used boxing to help him deal with grief and depression over the death of his mother, Princess Diana, in August 1997, almost 20 years ago.

My colleague at the Telegraph Bryony Gordon interviewed Prince Harry, who was discussing mental health issues. Harry had to walk behind his mother's coffin in front of a worldwide audience when he was only 12. He revealed the "total chaos" he experienced before finally getting help. People praised the young prince for speaking out, people with bipolar and borderline personality disorders, those suffering from depression, OCD and drug addiction. They said they had found a bit of extra courage. His admission was a landmark moment for mental health campaigners.

What remains brilliant for the sport of boxing was that Prince Harry highlighted the physical and mental benefits of boxing. It opened him up and allowed him to vent. The Prince admitted that at times he had struggled with aggression and turned to boxing as an outlet for his frustration. "During those years I took up boxing, because everyone was saying boxing is good for you and it's a really good way of letting out aggression," he said. "And that really saved me because I was on the verge of punching someone. So being able to punch someone who had pads was certainly easier."

Even at royal engagements, he said, he had found himself battling a "fight or flight" reaction without properly knowing why. Once he started opening up to friends, he added, he found those same friends felt able to "unravel their own issues." Boxing, so visceral in its nature, really does have healing qualities.

By the way, British boxing has its aristocratic roots, with the 9th Marquess of Queensberry sponsoring a code of laws – the Queensberry Rules – while in the early 1800s John Jackson taught the rudiments of "hit and not be hit" to, among others, Lord Byron and other high society gentlemen at the Pugilistic Club in central London.

FLANAGAN AND CROLLA

WBO lightweight titleholder Terry Flanagan moved to 33-0 with a victory over Petr Petrov, but he still needs "that big fight" to cross over. A fight with Anthony Crolla, the opponent Flanagan wanted in a cross-Manchester derby, doesn't look like it will happen any time soon, as the two men work with rival promoters and opposing television networks.

Flanagan needs Crolla. Crolla has the name, which came about largely because his skull was broken while apprehending burglars. Flanagan craves his crossover moment. A matchup with Crolla would have a terrific narrative, as the two men were former schoolmates, but that opportunity may have passed because Crolla lost in a rematch to Jorge Linares. Perhaps Flanagan will have to sacrifice himself to a

Terry Flanagan (right) beat Petr Petrov. Now he's hunting for bigger game.

fight with the brilliant Ukrainian Vasyl Lomachenko, which is being discussed.

"I can only prove [myself] against the best and I hope to fight the best next," Flanagan said. "Frank Warren has promised me those big fights next. Either Jorge Linares, Vasyl Lomachenko, Mikey Garcia or someone like that. They're the fights I want, hopefully Frank can make them happen. I'm confident of beating anyone at 135 pounds. I'm big and strong and Lomachenko would be coming up in weight. If anyone is going to beat him, it's me. I'll box off with him and I think I've got the style to beat him."

Flanagan revealed that Hall of Famer Joe Calzaghe is his role model. "I try and base my style on him. He's my all-time favorite British fighter. A southpaw, busy, fast. A tough fighter."

Warren promoted Calzaghe. And he admitted to me that "Terry needs the big names." "Joe was a 12-year overnight sensation," Warren said. "And this guy could do the same thing. No doubt about that. I remember having letters from ITV, Sky writing to me saying they did not want Joe Calzaghe on the channel. I had to fight tooth and nail to get him on there. I've not had that with Terry, but the thing is, he needs that defining fight. He needs a fight where all you guys will go back to your sports editors and say look, this is something special. If our guy comes through this, he'll be the number one. It's my job to deliver it."

NICOLA ADAMS

Fresh from her four-round pro-debut victory over Argentine Virginia Carcamo (who had a horrible, brawling style), I mentioned to Nicola Adams at the post-fight news conference that she looked strong late in the two-minute rounds and that three-minute rounds might suit her. Adams agreed wholeheartedly.

Never one to hold back, a few days later Adams went to the British Boxing Board and requested three-minute rounds and lighter gloves for women. And she got her way on an extended minute for her next four-round fight, which is not to everyone's liking. Two-minute rounds have been the standard in women's boxing. "Fighters and fans want these changes. It will make the fights more entertaining," said Adams, a double Olympic flyweight champion. "I found it really frustrating. Every time I felt I was getting close to a stoppage, the bell would go for the end of the round."

Adams also wants women to use the same-sized gloves as men. British rules say female boxers must wear 10-ounce gloves, regardless of the weight class, while male fighters wear 8-ounce gloves for all divisions up to welterweight and 10-ounce gloves above welterweight. "I will continue to campaign for lighter gloves," Adams said. Her view falls in line with lightweight Katie Taylor (4-0, 2 KOs), the 2012 Olympic gold medalist who had also been urging the authorities to make the change to three-minute rounds. The WBC, nonetheless, has urged caution about changes in women's boxing, stressing the dangers of fatigue and dehydration, and insisting that women's championship boxing must stay at a 10-round maximum.

JAMES DEGALE

Once a year, the British Boxing Writers Club has a lunch to celebrate one of our world champions. In recent years, we have been joined by standouts "Prince" Naseem Hamed and Joe Calzaghe. In April it was the turn of James DeGale, in fine mood and fettle, having had surgery on a deviated septum. Breathing well, finally, DeGale revealed the four fights he would like before hanging 'em up.

"I've got a mandatory I've got to fight, but if I could name four dream fights to finish my career, it would be Gennady Golovkin, a rematch with George Groves, a challenge from Callum Smith and maybe Andre Ward. I'm in boxing for these big fights," said the 31-year-old. "If anyone can make it happen, it's Al Haymon. He's the man, he's real and he's been great for me."

"Boxing's been very, very good to me but it's a hard, hard sport," continued DeGale, after his grueling draw with Badou Jack in Brooklyn in their super middleweight world title unification fight in January. A dental bridge came loose midway through the contest with Jack, and DeGale had his front teeth knocked out.

"I'm not going to be one of these fighters who can't call it a day," he said. "I'm looking to earn so much money in my next fight that I can call it a day. I actually enjoyed the Jack fight. That's the sick thing. It was a good, hard fight.

"If I could have boxed someone back in the day," he added, "I'd have loved to be around with Sugar Ray Leonard, Marvelous Marvin Hagler, Tommy Hearns." Some list.

Enjoy the fights. Cheers.

TOP 10

1. CARL FRAMPTON
2. KELL BROOK
3. AMIR KHAN
4. LEE SELBY
5. ANTHONY JOSHUA
6. JAMES DEGALE
7. JAMIE MCDONNELL
8. BILLY JOE SAUNDERS
9. SCOTT QUIGG
10. TONY BELLEW

11-15: Callum Smith, Terry Flanagan, Chris Eubank Jr., Ricky Burns, Kal Yafai.

Through fights of April 30, 2017

Gareth A Davies is boxing correspondent for The Telegraph, London.

AP

BEST OF DOUGIE'S MAILBAG

By Doug Fischer

Doug Fischer would favor Anthony Joshua (left) over all the top heavyweights.

EXCERPTS FROM THE RINGTV.COM EDITOR'S POPULAR COLUMN

Since 2001, RingTV.com Editor Doug Fischer has held an ongoing dialog – which occasionally becomes heated debate – with boxing fans from around the world in "Dougie's Mailbag." The following excerpts are from the April 28 and May 1 editions of the Friday and Monday mailbags.

TOM, from Pennsylvania, was blown away by Anthony Joshua's 11th-round stoppage of former heavyweight champ Wladimir Klitschko before 90,000 fans at Wembley Stadium in London on April 29. To his eyes, Joshua proved to have "all the tools to be the king of the division for years to come." Tom says Joshua has always showed excellent skill but "proved beyond a shadow of a doubt that the chin and heart are there as well," and he believes the British star has elite recuperative ability. As much as Tom wanted to see Klitschko win, he says, "With Joshua's emphatic victory, I think the heavyweight division can make some amazing fights" (and he favors AJ over every other top heavyweight).

DOUGIE'S reply: I would also favor Joshua against his fellow titleholders and standouts, but I wouldn't count the top dogs out. WBC titleholder Deontay Wilder has the power to down AJ and although the American is not the cleanest finisher in the game, he will go for the kill if he hurts the British Adonis. WBO beltholder Joseph Parker has deceptively quick hands and may have better whiskers than Joshua. Top contender Luis Ortiz can show the 27-year-old what inside combinations look like. And lineal/RING champion Tyson Fury can give anyone fits when his mind is right.

Hopefully, we'll get to witness these matchups. There's a sweet heavyweight round-robin on deck between Joshua, Wilder, Parker, Ortiz, Klitschko (if he decides to stay in the game) and, of course, the wild card (or king if you're a purist) of the bunch, Fury, provided the Powers That Be can get along and do business.

Regarding Joshua's mettle, he definitely has a warrior's heart. The chin isn't made of paper mache but it's not cast from the mold of George Chuvalo or even Oliver McCall. It can be dented, which should make for many thrilling moments in the future. I agree that he has good recuperative ability, something not all fighters (especially heavyweights) possess, but I wouldn't fault a born puncher like Wilder for believing that he could put Joshua down and keep him down before that ability kicks in. Klitschko didn't jump on Joshua after scoring his knockdown. Wilder, Parker and Ortiz certainly would.

PAUL, from the U.K., believes that Klitschko let Joshua off the hook in Round 7 and paid for it. He says the 41-year-old veteran "genuinely had Joshua and let him recover." Paul is disappointed that Klitschko fell short but says Joshua's victory is good for boxing.

DOUGIE'S reply: I agree that Klitschko allowed Joshua to recover after dropping (and hurting) him in Round 6, but hindsight is always 20/20. In real time, Joshua appeared to be a spent bullet, and given his history (having never been past Round 7), it seemed a safe gamble for Klitschko to take the younger man deep and drown him there (which was probably his original game plan). In retrospect, the former champ should have taken the more risky gamble and jumped on AJ in Round 7.

However, keep in mind that Klitschko had been dropped in Round 5 and likely expended a lot of energy rallying from his knockdown and

keeping his aggression up in Round 6. So maybe there were some concerns about punching himself out (as Joshua had briefly done) in Rounds 7 and 8.

I agree that Joshua's victory is great for the heavyweight division and good for the overall health of the sport, but I think that Klitschko's bold stand is also a boon for boxing and the glamour division. If Wladdy wants to remain in the game, I will consider him a major player.

CW, from the U.K., wonders if Joshua-Klitschko was the best heavyweight title fight since Lennox Lewis vs. Vitali Klitschko? He adds that "U.K. boxing is buzzing and AJ is at the forefront" and asks if "a win in the U.S. over Wilder would make him the biggest boxer in the world?"

DOUGIE'S reply: Would a victory over Wilder in America make Joshua boxing's biggest star? It would only add to his popularity and visibility in the U.S., that's for sure, but Joshua is arguably already the sport's biggest draw.

Was Joshua-Klitschko the best heavyweight title tilt since the 2003 clash of titans that was Lewis-Klitschko? That sounds about right. Or maybe since Lamon Brewster's decision loss to Sergey Liakhovich for the WBO title in 2006.

CIOBANU, from Romania, loved the Scott Quigg-Viorel Simion fight that was on the Joshua-Klitschko undercard. It filled his heart with pride seeing his countryman (Simion) go 12 hard rounds with the favored British contender and believes the difference in the fight was Quigg's superior fighting shape. Ciobanu was less enthused about Joshua-Klitschko, believing youth carried the U.K. star to victory. He thinks Fury and Ortiz have the footwork, skills and poise to not only beat Joshua, but knock him out.

DOUGIE'S reply: Hey, bring 'em on. Joshua called out Fury after the fight and Ortiz is one of the top-rated contenders for the WBA title that the British star picked up by beating Klitschko. I agree that they both possess skills and attributes that will further test Joshua, but I'm not convinced that they have enough tools to beat him.

I think it's going to take more than "footwork, skills and poise" to overwhelm Joshua.

I agree that Joshua's youth was a major factor in his ability to overcome Klitschko, but it certainly wasn't the only reason he was able to do it. I'm not going to call Klitschko "old" because I think he would have defeated most of the top heavyweights with the effort he gave on Saturday. He's a special athlete.

You're probably correct in that Quigg's conditioning was his saving grace against Simion. I heard that he put in the work at Wild Card Boxing Club in preparation for this IBF featherweight title-elimination bout.

Simion gave Quigg a proper welcome to the 126-pound division. It will be interesting to see how Quigg gels with new trainer Freddie Roach and if he's able to deal with the likes of Lee Selby (the holder of the IBF belt), Leo Santa Cruz, Abner Mares and Oscar Valdez if and when those fights are made.

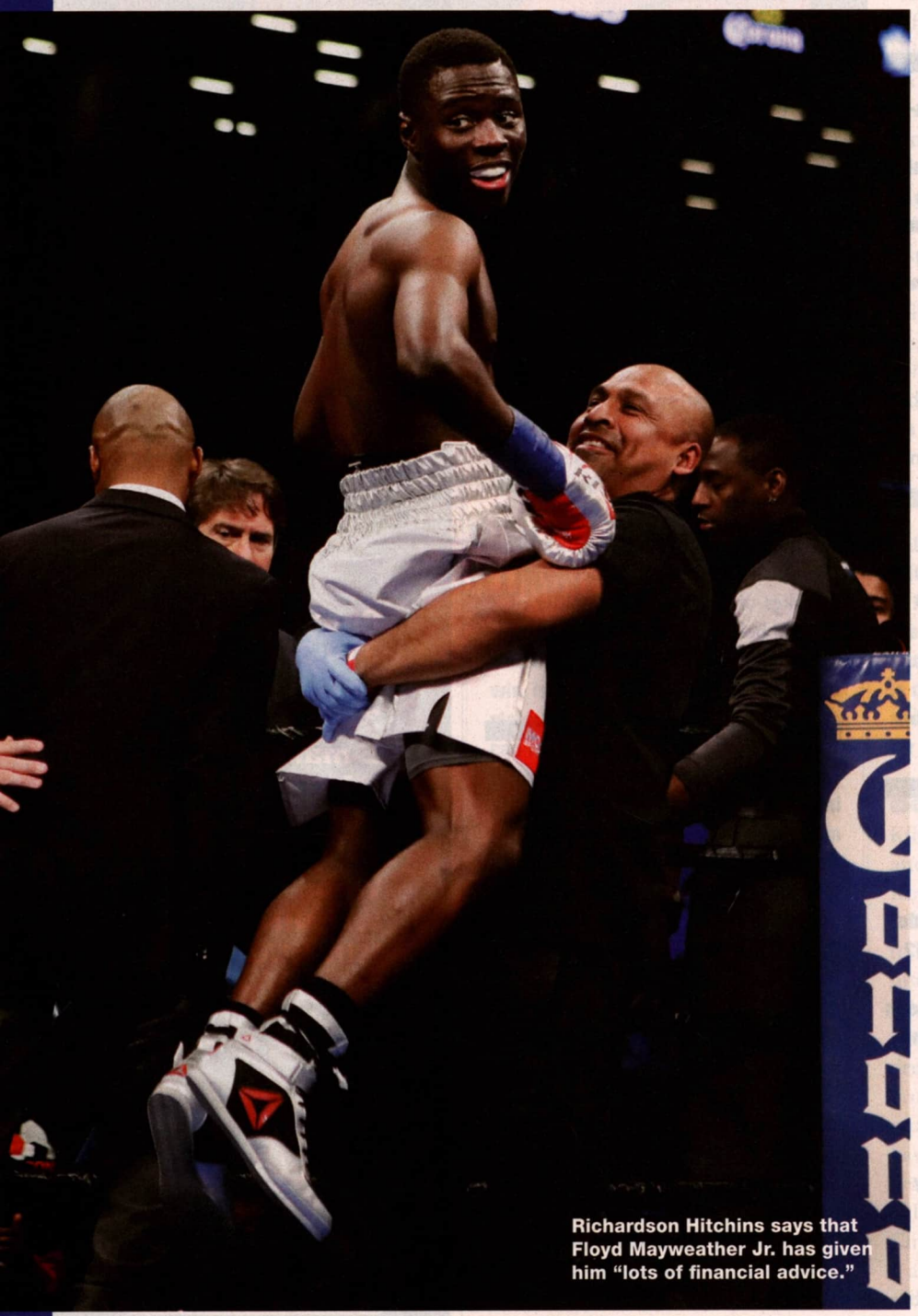
TABRAZE, from London, offered two interesting heavyweight mythical matchups: Anthony Joshua vs. the 1974 version of George Foreman (prior to the Muhammad Ali fight) and the version of Klitschko that beat David Haye vs. the 2000 version of Lennox Lewis.

DOUGIE'S reply: I have to favor the young Foreman over today's version of Joshua – by middle-rounds stoppage. Don't forget, Big George was 39-0 with 36 knockouts when he demolished Ken Norton in 1974 before the Rumble In The Jungle.

And I think the 2000 version of Lewis stops most versions of Klitschko. RING

MULTITALENTED

ANDRE BERTO PROTEGE **RICHARDSON HITCHINS** CAN FIGHT *AND* TALK



Richardson Hitchins says that Floyd Mayweather Jr. has given him "lots of financial advice."

Not many people knew who Richardson Hitchins was when he got up to speak at a press conference on March 30 in Manhattan.

Bigger stars, such as heavyweight Luis Ortiz, were seated just a few feet away to promote a card on April 22 at Barclays Center in Brooklyn. Hitchins was a 2016 Olympian in Rio but he didn't fight for the U.S. Instead, he represented Haiti, losing in a preliminary light welterweight bout to U.S. rival Gary Antuanne Russell. Still, Hitchins was plucked out of the Games by Floyd Mayweather Jr. and signed with the retired fighter in January. He made a successful debut on March 4, stopping Mario Perez in the first round on the Keith Thurman-Danny Garcia card at Barclays Center.

Hitchins, who is from Brooklyn, described at the press conference how former titleholder Andre Berto, who represented Haiti in the 2004 Olympics, paid for his ticket to fly to an Olympic qualifier in Azerbaijan last June. Wearing a short-sleeved, hooded sweatshirt and baseball cap, the 19-year-old told the story of Berto's generosity. But he kept on going. He plugged himself; he plugged the card, which had Berto facing Shawn Porter in the main event. Leaning on the lectern and holding a portable microphone, Hitchins sounded more like a promoter than a green boxer embarking on just his second pro fight.

"I just want to thank Berto, and I'm happy to share the stage with him," Hitchins

said. "Watch me go to work. Watch him go to work. Everybody tune in on April 22. We have a lot of great fighters on the card."

He looked to his right and left at the other boxers on stage. "We got Julian Sosa. We got my teammate Jonathan (Alonso, who later dropped out of the card). We got Luis Ortiz (who also dropped out). Andre Berto vs. Shawn Porter is going to be a great fight. And everybody just tune in."

He went on for a couple of minutes. The card's lead publicist, Kelly Swanson, was so impressed with his gift of gab that she pulled him aside and told him she was going to pass her observation on to Mayweather, who was Hitchins' favorite fighter growing up.

"I'm a part of the event, and someday I hope to be the face of boxing," Hitchins said a few days later of his performance at the press conference and why he was so verbose. "So that is definitely something I want to be able to do. I just felt like talking about the other fighters because it was a big card. I wanted all the fighters to get recognition."

Hitchins backed up the talk with an impressive performance on April 22, shutting out Alexander Picot over four rounds to move to 2-0. Hitchins is a flashy fighter with fast hands and he ripped off combinations, bouncing punches off Picot to the delight of the hometown crowd. It was easy to see what Mayweather saw in Hitchins.

Hitchins met with Mayweather in Rio during the Games and dined with the former champion. While he had several other suitors, the meeting clinched it for Hitchins. "That was the promoter I always saw myself being with," he said. "I like that way he was moving (junior lightweight titleholder) Gervonta Davis, and at the Olympics I was telling myself I want to be with Floyd Mayweather."

THE ESSENTIALS

RICHARDSON HITCHINS

Age: 19

Weight class: Junior welterweight

Height: 5 feet 9 inches

Stance: Orthodox

Hometown: Brooklyn, New York

Record: 2-0 (1 knockout)

Biggest strengths: Hitchins is a flashy fighter with fast hands and quick feet. He rips off combinations and then gets out of harm's way like a seasoned veteran. He also goes to the body well.

Biggest question marks: He likes to show off his dazzling handspeed by throwing a lot of punches. As he progresses in his career, it will be interesting to see whether he tries to sit down on his punches and add a little more power to his arsenal or is content to rely on his speed.

He says that Mayweather has talked to him about saving his money, their conversations more about life after boxing than anything in the ring. Just as Berto served as a mentor in the amateurs, Mayweather has now moved into that role in the pros. "Lots of financial advice and about marketing yourself," Hitchins said. "I'm just grateful for someone like that to support me like that. It's surreal that he's helping me because I grew up looking up to Floyd. I watched all the 24/7s, I watched all his training videos, all of his fights. I've seen every one of his fights."

And now it's Mayweather who gets to watch him.

3 MORE TO WATCH

DANIEL DUBOIS

HEAVYWEIGHT

Dubois (2-0, 2 KOs) would have been a medal favorite for the 2020 Tokyo Olympics but instead signed with promoter Frank Warren in January. Often compared to heavyweight titleholder Anthony Joshua, the 6-foot-4 Londoner, 19, has demolished his first two opponents, most recently stopping Blaise Mendouo in the second round on April 22. Big and athletic, Dubois jabs well and has a quick right hand over the top. He is also technically sound for someone so young.

SHAKUR STEVENSON

FEATHERWEIGHT

The much-hyped Stevenson (1-0) won his pro debut on April 22, defeating Edgar Brito by a technical decision after Brito couldn't continue because of cuts on a Top Rank PPV show. The 2016 U.S. Olympic silver medalist dealt with Brito's roughhouse tactics and peppered him with straight lefts and uppercuts over six rounds, showing glimpses of the potential that has made him such an intriguing prospect.

GLENN DEZURN

JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHT

Dezurn (9-0, 6 KOs) won an important crossroads bout against previously undefeated Leroy Davila on April 14 on Showtime's ShoBox program, taking a unanimous decision. What also made the victory noteworthy is that Dezurn prepared for the bout by sparring with his wife, former amateur standout Franchon Crews, who made her pro debut against Olympic star Claressa Shields.

Claressa Shields (right, punching Franchon Crews) is only one of several former Olympians now making waves as professionals.

THE OLYMPIANS ARRIVE

THE INFLUX OF GIFTED BOXERS PROMISES TO CHANGE WOMEN'S BOXING

The 1983 NFL Draft is seen by many as the best in league history, as seven future Hall of Famers – led by John Elway, Jim Kelly and Dan Marino – and a number of other impactful players entered the league at the same time.

Women's boxing is now experiencing a similar windfall.

The moment two-time Olympians Claressa Shields and Katie Taylor entered the pro ring in 2016 was a jolt to the sweeter science. Add to that the 2017 addition of Olympians Nicola Adams and Marlen Esparza, Natasha Jonas' decision to turn pro and the possibility of Mikaela Mayer eventually joining the group, and you have the beginning of an unprecedented era.

Already, these fighters have garnered a great deal of media attention, with Taylor and Adams appearing on high-profile European cards, Shields becoming the first woman to headline a ShoBox card (and gracing the cover of THE RING Magazine) and Esparza getting a televised spot on Golden Boy Promotions' first ESPN card.

And we're just getting started. Here's a closer look at the women's boxing equivalent of those 1983 draftees.

THE GAME-CHANGER

Elway, the first pick in the 1983 draft, went on to win two Super Bowls, was a nine-time Pro Bowler and changed the way the quarterback position was played. Claressa Shields has the opportunity, talent and drive to set a similar standard in the ring. The only American boxer, male or female, to win two Olympic gold medals is most likely the best middleweight in the country already. And there is talk of a fight with unbeaten WBO/WBC middleweight champion Christina Hammer, which would be an opportunity for Shields to take the next step. Add in the fact that she is only 22 years old and co-managed by former HBO Pay-Per-View boss Mark Taffet, who knows a little something about making stars, and the stage is set for an epic game-changing career for the pride of Flint, Michigan.

THE NATURAL

With a quick release and a cannon for an arm, Marino, the Miami Dolphins legend, put up remarkable numbers over the years. He never won a Super Bowl but there is no question that he was one of the greats. England's Nicola Adams has those natural gifts you can't teach. Always seemingly two steps ahead of her opponents as she won a pair of Olympic gold medals, Adams turned pro in April and nothing seems to have changed. Possible obstacles for the Virgil Hunter-coached Adams are age and competition. She turns 35 in October, which will force her to accelerate her pace, and at flyweight she will face some of the best pros – including Jessica Chavez, Ava Knight and Susi Kentikian.

GREAT, BUT NOT THE GREATEST

Jim Kelly put up astronomical numbers in the USFL before moving to the NFL and leading the Buffalo Bills to four Super Bowls. The bad news? Kelly's Bills lost all four of those games. That isn't a knock on Kelly. And if Ireland's Katie Taylor doesn't reach the heights of Shields or Adams, that doesn't mean she isn't going to have a career to remember. In fact, the stage is set for her to make significant noise in Europe for years to come. Since turning pro in November of 2016, the 2012 Olympic gold winner has already fought five times, impressing in each fight. Top promoter Eddie Hearn will continue to keep her busy on big cards. And with her loyal Irish fan base supporting her every step of the way, the 30-year-old will have every opportunity to succeed. All that remains is for her to win the big one.

THE UNDERRATED

Playing in the media capital of the world for nine years, Ken O'Brien, another 1983 draftee, put up good numbers for the New York Jets but never had the supporting cast to get to the big game. Which brings us to Marlen Esparza. A bronze medal winner in the 2012 Games, Esparza is a good fighter who will need everything around her to work in conjunction to get to an all-time level. She has the Golden Boy Promotions machine to help get her in front of the people, but, like Adams, she's in the treacherous flyweight division. Luckily, at 27, she has time to develop her pro game and make a run at the champs. RING

FIGHTER OF THE MONTH

MARIANA JUAREZ
UD 10 Catherine Phiri

When popular Mexican star Mariana Juarez lost a title eliminator to Daniela Romina Bermudez last August, many believed "Barbie" was on the downside of a career that began in 1998. But against Zambia's Catherine Phiri, the 37-year-old Juarez turned back the clock and fought through a cut from a clash of heads to win a hard-fought unanimous decision and take Phiri's WBC bantamweight crown, giving Juarez major titles in three divisions.

POUND FOR POUND

1. **CECILIA BRAEKHUS**
Norway • 30-0 (8 KOs)
Welterweight
2. **DELFINE PERSOON**
Belgium • 38-1 (16 KOs)
Lightweight
3. **YESICA YOLANDA BOPP**
Argentina • 31-1 (13 KOs)
Junior flyweight
4. **JELENA MRDJENOVICH**
Canada • 37-10-1 (19 KOs)
Featherweight
5. **JESSICA CHAVEZ**
Mexico • 28-4-3 (4 KOs)
Flyweight
6. **ERICA ANABELLA FARIAS**
Argentina • 24-1 (10 KOs)
Junior welterweight
7. **AMANDA SERRANO**
U.S. • 32-1-1 (24 KOs)
Featherweight
8. **IBETH ZAMORA SILVA**
Mexico • 27-6 (12 KOs)
Junior flyweight
9. **LAYLA MCCARTER**
U.S. • 38-13-5 (9 KOs)
Lightweight
10. **ZULINA MUNOZ**
Mexico • 48-1-2 (28 KOs)
Junior bantamweight

Through fights of April 30, 2017

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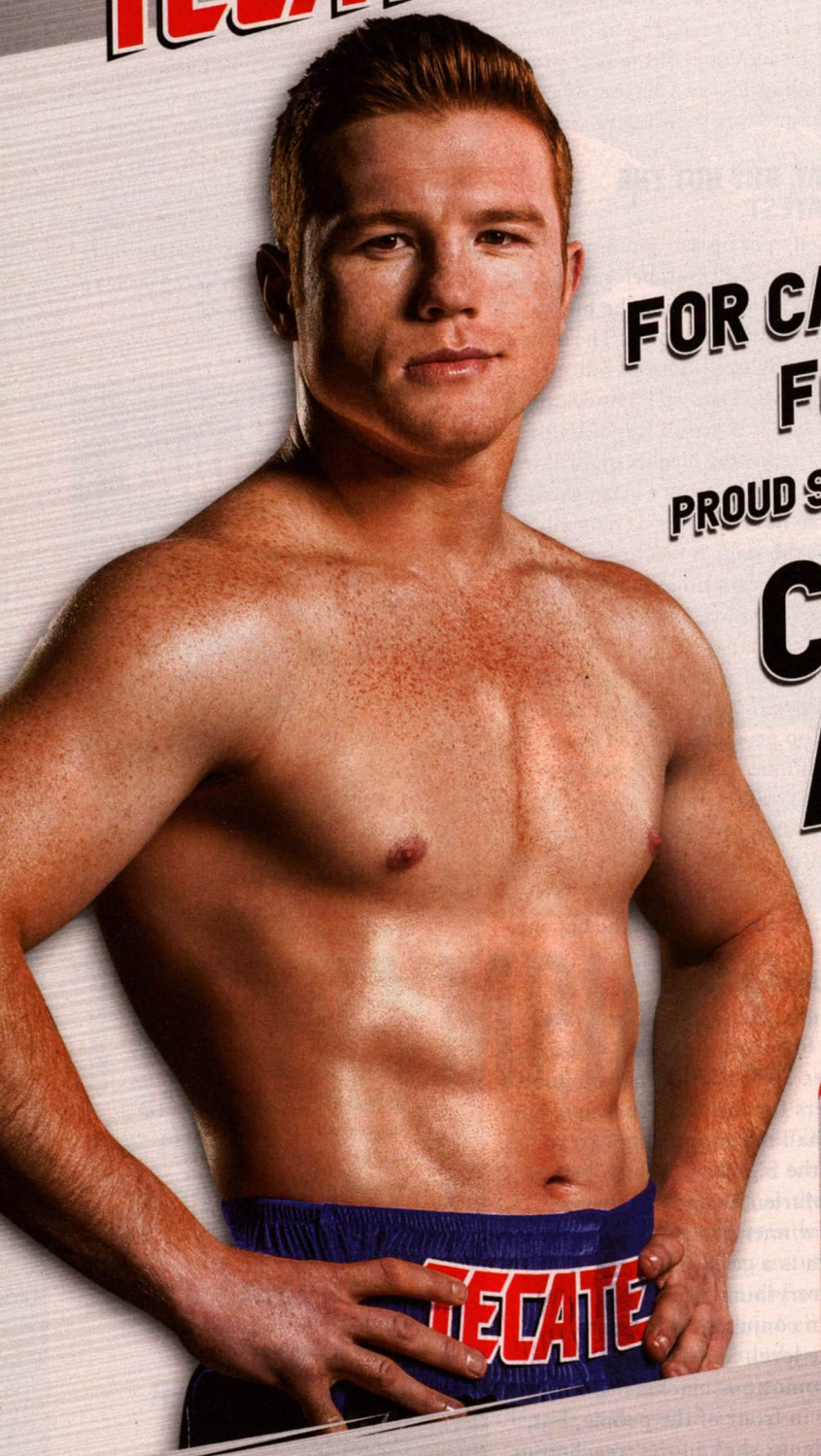

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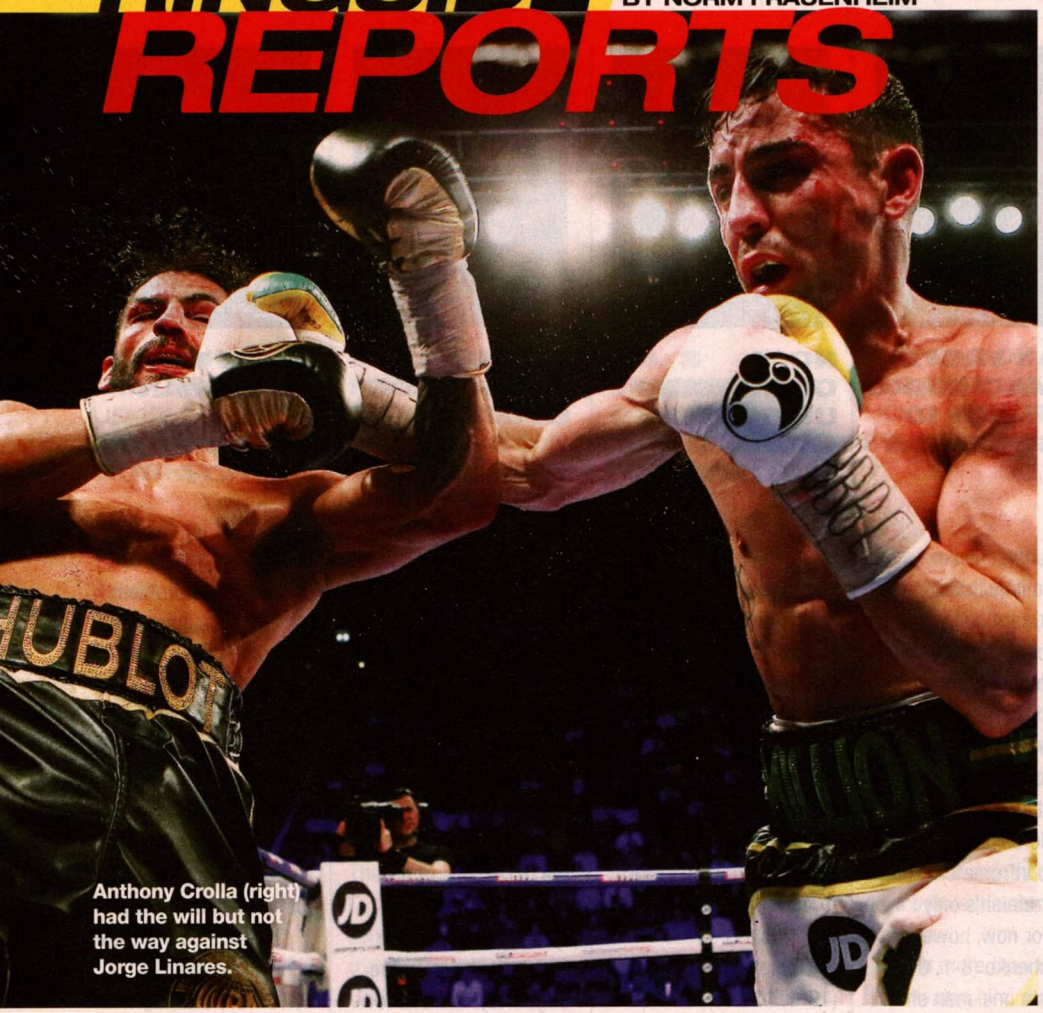
RINGSIDE REPORTS

BY NORM FRAUENHEIM



Anthony Crolla (right) had the will but not the way against Jorge Linares.

JORGE LINARES UD 12 ANTHONY CROLLA

Date: March 25
Site: Manchester Arena, Manchester, England
Division: Lightweight
Weights: Linares 134.4 pounds, Crolla 134.4
RING ratings (before fight): Linares C, Crolla No. 4
Networks: Showtime, Sky Sports

Anthony Crolla entered the arena to James Arthur's version of "Hometown Glory." He climbed up the steps and through the ropes to Whitney Houston's "Million Dollar Bill." But the hit parade ended after the opening bell.

Jorge Linares (42-3, 27 KOs) left Crolla with only the blues.

For Linares, it was an encore of his victory last September over Crolla (31-6-3, 13 KOs), a beloved hometown favorite who came back from a skull fracture sustained in a 2014 confrontation with burglars in his Manchester neighborhood.

"I'm so sorry," a bloodied Crolla told 15,000 stunned fans after losing 118-109 on all three cards in a rematch for the RING and WBA lightweight titles.

No apology necessary.

Linares has never looked better in perhaps a breakthrough victory. His performance was deemed brilliant. He went from a very good fighter to one who merits serious pound-for-pound consideration.

"Anthony and I are warriors and we put on a great fight," said Linares, who simply had too many punches and too much speed, both of which he used to land a wicked uppercut for a knockdown in the seventh round. "I can tell everyone here that Anthony Crolla has some big balls. That's why he made it through 12 rounds with me.

"I want to fight in the States now. I want the biggest names, the best fighters."

There was some immediate talk about Mikey Garcia, the WBC's 135-pound champion, who wasted little time in calling out the multiskilled Venezuelan. Garcia has tactical skill and power that was scary in a January 28 stoppage of Dejan Zlaticanin. There's also Terry Flanagan, the WBO beltholder, who is looking for bigger names and a brighter spotlight after a ho-hum decision over Petr Petrov.

First, however, there might be a mandatory challenge for the WBA belt. Luke Campbell, a 2012 Olympic gold medalist for the U.K., won that opportunity with a ninth-round stoppage of Darleys Perez on the April 29 undercard of Anthony Joshua's epic TKO of Wladimir Klitschko at London's Wembley Stadium.

"Most definitely," Campbell said when asked if he wanted Linares next. "Linares is a brilliant champion. I've been watching him from when I was little. He's a great champion. To be the best, you've got to beat the best, and that's exactly what I'm going to do."

It was no coincidence that Linares was at ringside to watch Campbell (17-1, 13 KOs), who is 5-0 since his lone loss to Yvan Mendy in 2015.

"Whatever you want, when you want," Linares said to Campbell as he congratulated the Brit on his win.

In addition to Crolla, Linares beat Kevin Mitchell in May 2015.

"We've got to find a Brit who can beat him, you know?" promoter Eddie Hearn said. "I think Luke Campbell can have a great fight with Jorge Linares. Luke wants to fight the very best. We'll be speaking to Golden Boy and Jorge, and make Luke Campbell against Jorge Linares next." »

WORLDWIDE RESULTS— Go to: bit.ly/worldwide-results or scan the QR code to see weekly fight results at RingTV.com.

MATT WEST

NO. 7 MAIRIS BRIEDIS UD 12 NO. 6 MARCO HUCK

April 1, Dortmund, Germany (RTL, Box Nation)

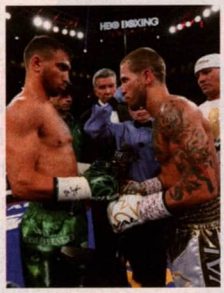
It was the first step in a cruiserweight shuffle. Goodbye, Marco Huck. Hello, Mairis Briedis.

Briedis (22-0, 18 KOs), a relative unknown from Latvia, moved into the title mix by outpointing Huck (40-4-1, 27 KOs), who was at home and had much more experience in big fights but fell short in skill.

The WBC's 200-pound title had gone up for grabs because of a hand injury Tony Bellew suffered at heavyweight against David Haye. It was the chance Briedis needed to prove that his perfect record was no fluke.

His performance said he'd be around for a while. There was no argument on cards that favored Briedis by a one-sided 118-109, 116-111 and 117-110.

Who's next? A week after Briedis' introduction to the top of the division, Oleksandr Usyk re-asserted his dominance with a decision over Michael Hunter.



NO. 1 VASYL LOMACHENKO TKO 9 NO. 10 JASON SOSA

April 8, Oxon Hill, Md. (HBO)

Vasyl Lomachenko, Baryshnikov in boxing gloves, continues his unprecedented dance into the top of the pound-for-pound debate.

Maybe Mikey Garcia can stop him. Maybe Jorge Linares can. Maybe Orlando Salido can rough him up in rematch of the Ukrainian's only loss. For now, however, Lomachenko (8-1, 6 KOs) is a one-man show with agile footwork and an astonishing ability to punch from any angle.

Jason Sosa (20-2-4, 15 KOs) was just another one of Lomachenko's targets. He had no chance. Sosa's corner threw in the towel after nine one-sided rounds for the WBO's 130-pound title.

There's talk about moving to 135 for a showdown with Garcia, but a rematch with Salido might be next.

"The first time, it was like a third-grader fighting a 12th-grader," Lomachenko said. "I've now graduated. I want to invite Salido to my university."

NO. 1 OLEKSANDR USYK UD 12 MICHAEL HUNTER

April 8, Oxon Hill, Md. (HBO)

He's one of the Ukrainians not named Vasyl Lomachenko or Wladimir Klitschko. Remember Oleksandr Usyk.

It's getting harder and harder to miss Usyk, who is taking the snoozer out of cruiser with an attention-grabbing run through the overlooked weight class.

True stardom for Usyk (12-0, 10 KOs), who counted Lomachenko as a teammate in the 2008 and 2012 Olympic Games (and won gold in the latter), probably awaits him at heavyweight, but he's making history at cruiser while getting ready to make the jump: He won the WBO title in only his 10th fight. He has defended it twice, including a one-sided decision over Michael Hunter (12-1, 8 KOs).

"I did what I wanted," Usyk said after winning 117-110 on all three cards in a bout that could have ended in a 12th-round stoppage "He took a lot of punches. I thought maybe they would stop it.

"I'd love to fight any of the titleholders, any time, any place."

NO. 8 OLEKSANDR GVOZDYK TKO 3 YUNIESKI GONZALEZ

April 8, Oxon Hill, Md. (HBO)

So, just how good was that 2012 Ukrainian Olympic team? It seems to be getting better every day.

If an Olympic team can be judged by its impact on the pro ranks, the Ukrainians at the London Games are beginning to look like a historical rival to the Sugar Ray Leonard-led U.S. team at Montreal in 1976.

First, there was gold medalist Vasyl Lomachenko. Then there was Oleksandr Usyk, also a gold medalist. The latest 2012 alumnus creating a buzz? Oleksandr Gvozdyk.

Gvozdyk won bronze in London, yet appears to have gold in his pro future as a light heavyweight after an emphatic stoppage of Yunieski Gonzalez.

The 30-year-old Gvozdyk (13-0, 11 KOs) walked through and over Gonzalez (18-3, 14 KOs), dropping him twice with right hands before the Cuban's corner ended it at 2:55 of the third round.

NO. 2 TERRY FLANAGAN UD 12 NO. 10 PETR PETROV

April 8, Manchester, England (BoxNation)

Winning is no problem for Terry Flanagan. Motivation has been elusive.

That search continued against Petr Petrov in a Flanagan performance competent enough to put him closer to the big-time platform he's seeking.

"It was a comfortable win," Flanagan (33-0, 13 KOs) said after retaining the WBO's lightweight title in a 120-108, 118-110, 116-112 decision over Petrov (38-5-2, 19 KOs).

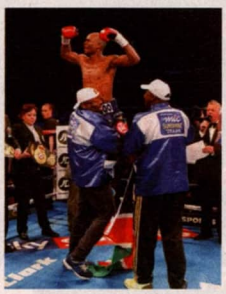
But Flanagan doesn't want comfort. He wants Mikey Garcia and Jorge Linares.

"I need those big fights to get me up for it," said Flanagan, who also admitted he should have tried to stop Petrov.

Flanagan promoter Frank Warren confirmed he's trying to put together a bout with Garcia or Linares.

"Linares is the one I want to make," Warren said. "Terry's going to have to raise his game. He can do that."

He'll have to.



NO. 6 JULIUS INDONGO UD 12 NO. 4 RICKY BURNS

April 15, Glasgow, Scotland (Sky Sports)

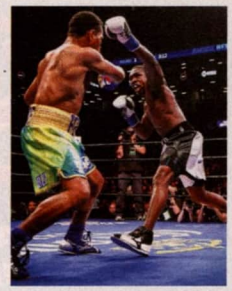
Julius Indongo likes to say he has no fear. "I can't be scared of another man," he said.

He then delivered another surprising performance that provided lots of reasons for the junior welterweights – Terence Crawford's division – to fear him.

The left-handed Indongo (22-0, 11 KOs) beat Ricky Burns (41-6-1, 14 KOs) in almost every conceivable way, scoring a 116-112, 118-110, 120-108 decision with agile feet, fast hands and many-angled punches for the IBF and WBA titles.

It was so impressive that Burns' own promoter, Eddie Hearn, signed Indongo, a Namibian who emerged in December with a first-round stoppage of Russian Eduard Troyanovsky in Moscow.

"I think everyone was impressed with Julius, and he has now become one of the key players in the division," Hearn told U.K. media. "I'm happy to link up with the team for his next fight."



NO. 3 SHAWN PORTER TKO 9 ANDRE BERTO

April 22, Brooklyn, N.Y. (Showtime)

There's nothing subtle about Shawn Porter. He pursues what he wants. Headstrong and often head-first, Porter punished Andre Berto in what was an unambiguous statement.

What Porter wants is a rematch with Keith Thurman.

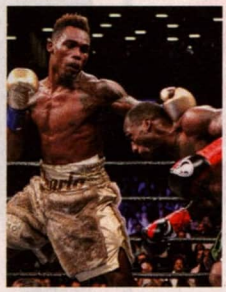
"Shawn wanted to send a sign," father and trainer Kenny Porter said after his son scored three knockdowns in a ninth-round stoppage.

Berto (31-5, 24 KOs), bloodied after the fourth loss in his last seven bouts, was simply there to help deliver the message. Thurman got it, but it wasn't clear he was ready to rush into a sequel of his victory over Porter last June.

"He's hungry," Thurman said. "You see the way he fights. It could be a great fight."

But Porter (27-2-1, 17 KOs) only wanted to hear something definitive.

"I was wishing he said yes," said Porter, also bloodied but determined as ever.



NO. 3 JERMELL CHARLO KO 6 CHARLES HATLEY

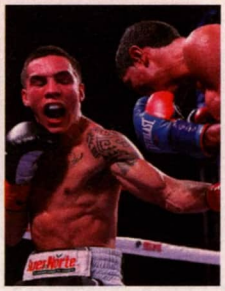
April 22, Brooklyn, N.Y. (Showtime)

Jermell Charlo waited. Waited some more. All the while, he grew increasingly frustrated by an 11-month stretch without a fight and the purse that comes with one.

He was awaiting a mandatory. But that can mean anything these days. Charlo (29-0, 14 KOs) saw it as an affront to him and his brother, Jermall. Combined, the twins are 54-0.

"Everyone disrespects us," said Jermell, who then proceeded to demand some respect for himself with a convincing sixth-round knockout of Charles Hatley (26-2-1, 18 KOs) in a defense of the WBC's 154-pound title.

In delivering his third-straight stoppage, Jermell flashed scary power. After knocking down Hatley in Round 3, Charlo landed a right early in the sixth, sending Hatley crashing head-first onto the canvas and under the ropes for a KO of the Year candidate.



NO. 7 OSCAR VALDEZ JR. UD 12 MIGUEL MARRIAGA

April 22, Carson, Calif. (Top Rank PPV)

Titles are belts without any rights to legitimacy. Oscar Valdez Jr. knew that, heard that in whispered doubts about whether his WBO title earned him the right to be called an equal of today's best featherweights.

It "bugged" him, Valdez said quietly in the days before his second defense.

It did more than that. It motivated him, drove him to prove a point throughout a bout that was tactical, punishing, exhilarating and exhausting.

In the end, Valdez (22-0, 19 KOs) did it all and endured it all, relying on wits, poise and footwork early and guts late for scores of 119-108, 116-111 and 118-109 over Miguel Marriaga (25-2, 21 KOs).

Valdez's performance, including a knockdown of Marriaga in the 10th, answered any questions that Leo Santa Cruz or Carl Frampton or Gary Russell Jr. might have had.

"You're a great fighter," Marriaga told him.

Legitimately.

NO. 3 DONNIE NIETES UD 12 KOMGRICH NANTAPECH

April 29, Cebu City, Philippines

The world knows Filipino boxing for Manny Pacquiao. But there's more to it than Senator Pacman's international celebrity. Donnie Nietes has been proof of that for 14 years.

If Pacquiao is the face of Filipino boxing, Nietes is its heartbeat.

The beat went on with the 34-year-old's 117-111,115-113, 117-111 decision over Komgrich Nantapech. Like so many Thai fighters, Nantapech was unknown. Like so many, he was also dangerous, tough and relentless.

Nantapech (22-4, 15 KOs) tested Nietes (40-1-4, 22 KOs) throughout 12 rounds for the IBF's flyweight crown. Nietes, a former champion at strawweight and junior fly, struggled in the middle rounds, perhaps because of an injury to his left hand. Swelling was apparent after Nietes took off his gloves.

In the end, however, Nietes joined Pacquiao and Nonito Donaire as the only Filipinos to win titles at three weights.

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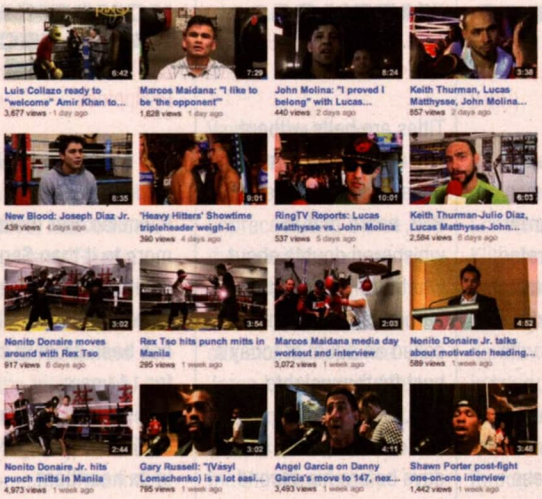

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COMING UP

Predictions are made by RING staff members Mitch Abramson, Doug Fischer, Brian Harty and Michael Rosenthal

MAY

TERENCE CRAWFORD VS. FELIX DIAZ

Date: May 20
Location: Madison Square Garden, New York City
Division: Junior welterweights (for Crawford's RING, WBC and WBO titles)
RING Ratings: Crawford (C, No. 8 P4P)
TV: HBO
Watchability rating (up to five stars): ★★★★
Also fighting: Raymundo Beltran (No. 10) vs. Jonathan Maicelo, lightweights; Shakur Stevenson vs. Carlos Suarez, featherweights.
Significance: Crawford (30-0, 21 KOs) is one of the hottest fighters in the world, with one dominating victory after another. This one will probably be more of the same. Diaz (19-1, 9 KOs) has beaten some good fighters – including Gabriel Bracero and Sammy Vasquez – and narrowly lost to a very good one, Lamont Peterson. Crawford is a next-level talent, though. The Dominican doesn't have much power, which means he'd likely have to outbox Crawford. Not likely.
Prediction: Rosenthal – Crawford KO 7; Fischer – Crawford KO 11; Harty – Crawford KO 9; Abramson – Crawford UD

KELL BROOK VS. ERROL SPENCE

Date: May 27
Location: Bramall Lane Football Ground, Sheffield, England
Division: Welterweights (for Brook's IBF title)
RING Ratings: Brook No. 2, Spence No. 7
TV: Showtime (U.S.); Sky (in U.K.)
Watchability rating (up to five stars): ★★★★★
Also fighting: George Groves (No. 4) vs. Fedor Chudinov (No. 9), super middleweights (for WBA title); David Allen vs. Lenroy Thomas, heavyweights.
Significance: This is a very risky fight for both boxers. Brook (36-1, 25 KOs) is coming off a fifth-round TKO loss to middleweight Gennady Golovkin – a fight in which Brook suffered a broken eye socket – but there is no reason to believe he has slipped as a welterweight. He remains a complete, formidable boxer. And he'll be fighting at home. Spence (21-0, 18 KOs) appears to have all the tools to become a star. We should see how good he is on May 27.
Prediction: Rosenthal – Spence UD; Fischer – Brook TKO 9 UD; Harty – Brook UD; Abramson – Brook SD

MAY 13 – Khalid Yafai (No. 6) vs. Suguru Muranaka, junior bantamweights (for Yafai's WBA title), Birmingham, England. Also, Sam Eggington vs. Ceferino Rodriguez, welterweights.
MAY 13 – Jose Argumedo (No. 4) vs. Gabriel Mendoza, strawweights (for Argumedo's IBF title), Mexico.
MAY 13 – Josh Warrington vs. Kiko Martinez, featherweights, Leeds, England.
MAY 13 – James Toney vs. Mike Sheppard, heavyweights, Ypsilanti, Michigan.
MAY 14 – Su-Yun Hong vs. Tamao Ozawa, junior flyweights (for vacant WBO title), Kyoto, Japan.
MAY 18 – Diego De La Hoya (No. 7) vs. Erik Ruiz, junior featherweights, Tucson, Arizona (ESPN2/ESPN Deportes).
MAY 20 – Gary Russell Jr. (No. 2) vs. Oscar Escandon, featherweights (for Russell's WBC title), Oxon Hill, Md. (Showtime). Also, Jose Uzcategui vs. Andre Dirrell (No. 5), super middleweights.
MAY 20 – Noel Gevor vs. Krzysztof Wlodarczyk, cruiserweights, Poznan, Poland.
MAY 20 – Gervonta Davis (No. 6) vs. Liam Walsh, junior lightweights (for Davis' IBF title), London (Showtime).
MAY 20 – Hassan N'Dam (No. 7) vs. Ryota Murata (No. 10), middleweights, Tokyo. Also, Ganigan Lopez (No. 3) vs. Ken Shiro (No. 10), junior flyweights (for Lopez's WBC title) and Juan Hernandez Navarrete (No. 10) vs. Daigo Higa (No. 8), flyweights (for Navarrete's WBC title).
MAY 20 – Kosei Tanaka vs. Angel Acosta, junior flyweights (for Tanaka's WBO title), Nagoya, Japan.
MAY 21 – Naoya Inoue (No. 1, No. 10 P4P) vs. Ricardo Rodriguez, junior bantamweights (for Inoue's WBO title), Tokyo. Also, Akira Yaegashi (No. 2) vs. Milan Melindo (No. 8), junior flyweights (for Yaegashi's IBF title).
MAY 27 – Orlando Salido (No. 2) vs. Amphon Suriyo, junior lightweights, Bacum, Mexico (beIN Sports en Espanol).
MAY 27 – Robert Helenius vs. Dereck Chisora, heavyweights, Helsinki, Finland.
MAY 27 – Anselmo Moreno (No. 4 bantamweight) vs. Julio Ceja, featherweights, Panama City, Panama.

JUNE

ADONIS STEVENSON VS. ANDRZEJ FONFARA

Date: June 3
Location: Montreal
Division: Light heavyweights (for Stevenson's WBC title)
RING Ratings: Stevenson No. 3
TV: Showtime
Watchability rating (up to five stars): ★★★★
Also fighting: Eleider Alvarez (No. 4) vs. Jean Pascal, light heavyweights
Significance: Stevenson (28-1, 23 KOs) should be fighting Joe Smith Jr., who stopped Fonfara last June, but at least the Haitian-Canadian is defending his title against a legitimate challenger. Fonfara (29-4, 17 KOs) gave Stevenson some resistance in their 2014 fight, including a ninth-round knockdown, but ultimately lost a wide decision. Is there a reason to believe anything will change? Stevenson is still trying to regain lost momentum after making a splash in 2013.
Prediction: Rosenthal – Stevenson KO 6; Fischer – Stevenson KO 7; Harty – Stevenson KO 12; Abramson – Stevenson KO 4

ANDRE WARD VS. SERGEY KOVALEV

Date: June 17
Location: Mandalay Bay, Las Vegas
Division: Light heavyweights
RING Ratings: Ward No. 1 (No. 1 P4P), Kovalev No. 2 (No. 2 P4P)
TV: HBO Pay-Per-View
Watchability rating (up to five stars): ★★★★
Also fighting: Guillermo Rigondeaux vs. Moises Flores, junior featherweights (for Rigondeaux's WBA title).
Significance: This is an extremely rare matchup, as the Nos. 1 and 2 pound-for-pound fighters will do battle. The last meeting between Ward and Kovalev, in November, was unsatisfying and controversial. Ward (31-0, 15 KOs) won a decision (114-113 on all cards) but was less than convincing to those who thought Kovalev (30-1-1, 26 KOs) deserved the nod. The rematch is bigger than the original. Hopefully it will also be less controversial.
Prediction: Rosenthal – Ward UD; Fischer – Kovalev KO 8; Harty – Kovalev SD; Abramson – Kovalev SD

JUNE 2 – Alexis Rocha vs. Cesar Valenzuela, junior middleweights, Los Angeles (RingTV.com, Estrealla TV).
JUNE 3 – Shannon Briggs vs. Fres Oquendo, heavyweights, Hollywood, Florida.
JUNE 9 – Joel Diaz Jr. vs. Abel Ramos, junior welterweights, Verona, New York (Showtime).
JUNE 9 – Cecilia Braekhus vs. Erica Anabella Farias, welterweights (for Braekhus' IBF, WBA, WBC and WBO titles), Bergen, Norway.
JUNE 10 – Simphiwe Khonco (No. 8) vs. Lito Dante, strawweights, Kempton Park, South Africa.
JUNE 30 – Robert Easter Jr. (No. 3) vs. Denis Shafikov (No. 4), lightweights (for Easter's IBF title), Toledo, Ohio.

JULY

JULY 1 – Manny Pacquiao (No. 4) vs. Jeff Horn, welterweights (for Pacquiao's WBO title), Brisbane, Australia.

TRAVELING MAN

Eddie Perkins (right) was one of the best fighters of the 1960s and early '70s. The product of Chicago, who held three junior welterweight titles over two reigns, was a defensive specialist and superb all-around boxer who made life miserable for his 140-pound rivals. That included fellow Hall of Famer Duilio Loi, with whom he had a three-fight series. Perkins fought to a draw with the Italian titleholder in 1961 in Milan, Italy, his first attempt to win a major belt. The American won their rematch and the WBA title by a unanimous decision 11 months later, also in Milan, but lost it on points to Loi three months after that in the same city. Loi retired after that fight. Perkins then defeated Roberto Cruz to win both the WBA and WBC titles in 1963 in Cruz's home country of the Philippines. He lost them on a controversial split decision to Carlos Hernandez in 1965 in Venezuela, Hernandez's country. Do you see a theme? Perkins would and did go anywhere for a fight, as he did to face Johnny DePeiza in Trinidad and Tobago (pictured here). In all, he fought in an astounding 24 countries outside his native U.S. And he fought well. RING

#ATTHEFIGHTS

By **Lamar Clark**

STYLES MAKE FIGHTS

1.

2.

3.

You might recognize these ringsiders: **1.** Danny and Angel Garcia (at the Edner Cherry vs. Omar Douglas card in Bethlehem, Pa.); **2.** Evander Holyfield and fan (New York Golden Gloves); **3.** Bernard Hopkins and photographer Matthew Heasely (Tevin Farmer vs. Arturo Reyes, Philadelphia); **4.** Claressa Shields (right) and Wanda Countiss (Bivol vs. Clarkson) and **5.** (left to right) Gary Russell Jr., Antuanne Russell and Antoine Douglas (Dmitry Bivol vs. Samuel Clarkson, Oxon Hill, Md.)

4.

5.

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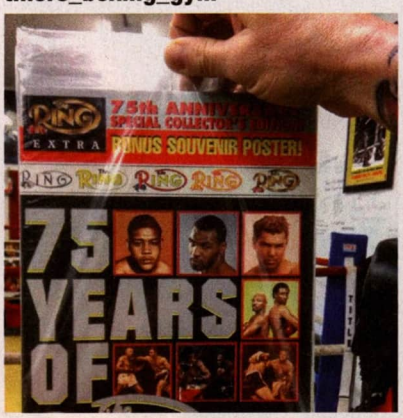

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